

**A FIRST BOOK ON  
TEACHING**

*By the same author*



LEARNING AND TEACHING IN THE JUNIOR SCHOOL  
THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF EDUCATION  
SOCIAL TRAINING



# A FIRST BOOK ON TEACHING

*by*  
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METHUEN & CO. LTD, LONDON  
*36 Essex Street, Strand, WC2*

*First published August 8th 1921*

6.5

CATALOGUE NO. 2/3260/10

PRINTED AND BOUND IN GREAT BRITAIN BY  
BULLER AND TANNER LTD., FROME AND LONDON



## PREFACE

**A** *FIRST BOOK ON TEACHING* was written with the purpose of helping training college students to make the best use of their periods of school practice and as great a success as possible of their first teaching post. The need for such a book is perhaps even greater now than it was in 1629, when it was first published. The period of training is grievously short both for students in training colleges or education departments of universities and at present there is little prospect of their course being lengthened. All teachers for several years to come will go into schools fraught with difficulties arising from changing standards and aims in this time of transition.

It must be emphasized that *A First Book on Teaching* is intended to be used by students preparing to work in one of several types of school—Primary or Secondary—and hence deals with those techniques that must be acquired by all teachers. For more precise help in understanding and applying modern methods of teaching children of a definite age group, other books should be used either in conjunction with or after this book; for example, every teacher should read at least the report issued by the Departmental Committee appointed by the Board of Education to consider the work in the type of school in which he intends to work: *Infant and Nursery School*, *The Primary School Report*, *The Education of the Adolescent*, *Secondary Education*, all by now accepted as authoritative statements of modern aims and practices.

If to the modern experienced teacher it seems that an undue attention is given to a consideration of class teaching and too little to methods of coping with the needs of individuals and groups that must arise in the modern child-centred school, I must claim as a justification that the vast majority of

students will still go out into schools where class teaching plays by far the largest, if not the predominating part.

The infinite variety of children—and of schools—makes it impossible to formulate definite rules for success in teaching. But unless the beginner can get help in his difficulties, he is apt to ascribe failure to bad luck, success to a pleasing personality.

A student, however gifted, should derive benefit from the application of generally accepted rules without sacrificing his individuality. If the reader is led to realize that even the lover of children needs courage, interest and effort in order to become a good teacher, the writing of this book has been worth while.

N. C.

## INTRODUCTION

**J**UST as it is difficult, even if possible, to dissociate the theory of education from the practice thereof, so when it comes to practice it is difficult to think about it without first formulating one's views on the place and function of the school in the State. Perhaps one of the most marked characteristics of the modern educator is the realization that he is as necessary a social worker in a modern State as the doctor or the health visitor. Nor is this only true of teachers in primary schools; what the children are in the schools they will be in the universities, technical schools, or works; the means by which they learn to acquire knowledge will be the means they use not only in adolescence but, if no university or higher school takes them, those they tend to use throughout their life. Hence a partial explanation of the tyranny of the written page, and still more the spoken word, over such thousands of modern citizens trained to listen and accept rather than to question and perhaps accept. Hence the extraordinary divergence in practice between the skilled workman who has learnt by experience to see what is wrong, or to diagnose a difficulty, before he acts, and the same workman in political life, who tends to use certain remedies without any previous careful diagnosis. He has learnt his job by doing it; but in many cases the size of the class, the incapacity of his teacher, the poverty of his home, the ignorance of an educational authority, prevented his learning even the rudiments of 'the job of thinking' before he left 'learning' as a child's occupation. For this reason, if for no other, it is wise to begin a book on the practice of education with an attempt to state the part the school should play in the life of the State.

The first and most obvious work of the school is to train children in those ways in which they could not be trained as

efficiently in the normal home; for example, the means whereby we acquire second-hand knowledge, reading, methods of calculating and writing, can be shown to a child more easily by a trained teacher than by the average parent. On the other hand, if parents speak well, a child can acquire speech far better in an educated home than at school, for it is by constantly hearing good speech and unconsciously imitating it that the art is acquired. These and similar examples suggest the generalization that one of the most important functions of a school is to give to the pupils such training and instruction as is more effectively given by professionally trained workers.

It is interesting to consider for a moment how many implications lie in this statement which at first sight is a mere platitude. For example, it throws a light on the question of vocational training which any expert in any department always maintains is done better at office or works. The demand that the schools shall devote themselves to general education and let better qualified people deal with technical matters is now voiced by many business men and works managers alike.<sup>1</sup> In the second place, it gives some help in the solution of all those problems which arise because education authorities and teachers constantly assume entire responsibility for the education of the future citizens. At any rate, in the primary schools much time and energy is wasted in trying to do for girls and boys under twelve what is only possible for adolescents from fourteen to sixteen; infant care is a case in point. It is possible to make little girls of thirteen interested in washing and clothing a celluloid doll; it is almost impossible to do it in such a way that a living memory of it survives the amazing experiences that the years from fourteen to eighteen bring to the child. When she marries at twenty, it is not what she did at thirteen that will, in all probability, stand her in good stead; she has to rely on weak, often erratic memory, and wisely prefers the advice given by her mother who has had experience and is thus backed by prestige suggestion.

<sup>1</sup> This is apparent in the Report on the Teaching of English, p. 129, issued by the Board of Education, 1921.

In both these examples the hypothesis has limited the school work, but it can also throw light on what should be done. In no place can a child learn so well the duties and pleasures of community life. Children in school learn practically the meaning of democracy, the strength of crowd opinion, the power of the crowd leader; they learn to help and to receive help from their own generation, and, above all, they learn the beginnings of that philosophy which has its origin in the equalities and inequalities of mankind. They realize that all children can have 'turns', a thing not so easy to learn in a small family; equally that a turn is of far more practical value to one child than another; they learn to accept the fact that equal endeavour does not produce equal reward. To learn such things among friendly folk of one's own age where the spirit of happy acceptance dominates is to learn them sweetly and healthily. This the school must do for children. No desire for scholarships, rewards, educational distinction, should be allowed to break the spirit of community life, the spirit that makes each individual give his best and take his limitations with philosophical cheerfulness.

To the child born into a modern state, community life is a very large factor in his spiritual environment and hence the importance of training the child to understand and use his spiritual environment. His physical environment is almost equally important and for many reasons has been more readily considered in the curriculum of the school. 'Man learns from nature, men, and things' is constantly misinterpreted by teachers, first into human and physical environment, and then into history, geography and nature-study. And the third duty of the school is said to be to acquaint the child with the properties of the world and the lives of its people. Now it is true that a school should give a child such knowledge as will make him feel 'at home' in this world. James was at this point when he said: 'The more different kinds of things a child thus gets to know by treating and handling them, the more confident grows his sense of kinship with the world in which he lives. . . . Compared with the youth taught by objective and experimental methods, one brought up exclusively by books carries through life a certain remoteness

from reality ; he stands as if were, out of the pale, and feels he stands so.'

But the mere teaching of any set of subjects will not give this sentiment towards one's environment ; indeed, it is probable that the people who have it most strongly are the workers—whoever they are—who approximate most closely to Wordsworth's peasants. Such an attitude towards life is the result of a gradual process of adaptation which is impossible unless an individual finds he can achieve a certain proportion of desired results. Hence the give and take of community life has its parallel in the physical life of a child—he desires to make a house, to climb a tree, to climb a wall, or walk on the ceiling ; he finds he can do certain of these things, not others. A girl of ten goes through a period of bitter resentment when she realizes the things a girl can't do ; the majority come out of the period fairly philosophically, mainly because there comes to them in increasing force the knowledge of the things a girl can do. But send the healthy girl brought up with boys into the spiritual and physical atmosphere of 'don't' and she will never learn to be at home as a woman.

James had in mind the necessity for teaching handwork when he made the statement quoted above, but it is equally applicable in the realm of knowledge. Ideas give as great a feeling of security as skill, though the two are so closely related that it is only for the purpose of discussing questions of curriculum that they need be dissociated. Should a man who has the language of a country and a knowledge of the continental Bradshaw go to a travel agency, he would go with a far more critical spirit than the man uneducated in this department. Political slogans rouse the politically uneducated ; a patent-medicine advertisement seldom moves the expert physiologist to be cured by faith.

Hence knowledge, as it were, gives a man scales and weights, not, it is true, of very great accuracy, by which he can test goods and choose accordingly. The school must begin the process of giving standard weights and measures, and as life is short and school-time very short, it must give the most useful first. In Arithmetic we now equip a boy with avoirdupois measure of weights and let the apothecaries go unused ;

so in each subject, and again in the selection of each part of a subject. Thus we teach the natural regions of France rather than of Siberia because they will be more useful, and again, we teach the natural regions rather than the political not only because they carry with them more knowledge but also because they serve to help us to understand—to 'weigh up', if we keep closely to the metaphor—other parts of the globe.

It is clear that the people who have to prepare children for their journey through life will differ greatly in their decisions as to the most useful equipment, but this attitude towards the child—that he is to be equipped with things useful for his journey—would even to-day work wonders with the curriculum of most schools, always assuming that educators do not make utility mean the same as money-making.

The less of school education a child can receive the more important is it that what is given he can keep as a lasting possession; a love of finding and naming flowers rather than the life-history of a bean; a sympathetic interest in foreign people and a capacity to read a simple book of travel and enjoy a map rather than knowledge of a more technical character; a love of good songs and an accurate knowledge of a few rather than no songs to sing when he desires to sing. Later, when we are considering the teaching of some subjects in more detail, certain corellaries to the main theme must be discussed, but here it must suffice to state that it is thus, by giving useful mental equipment of the kind not given better elsewhere, that the school puts the child in touch with his physical and human environment.

Such a task is no easy one, and directly or indirectly it is the main theme of this book. But again, certain broad principles can be formulated that may throw light on the subject and will illuminate some of the problems that arise as soon as a consideration of the art of teaching is undertaken.

From earliest times it has been looked on as the duty of the elders to teach the youth of the community the law and precepts of their fathers. Such knowledge as is common to a community, such sentiments as are held by the majority, conventional actions; these are a child's inheritance that he comes into by the help of his parents and elders. As life

became more complicated and full of detail, parents delegated to professional teachers more and more of the instruction of their children. Thus to-day a boy is sent to a public school not only to learn those subjects which are considered to be the birthright of an English gentleman but also to learn how to be the right sort of gentleman, just as in the fifteenth century a boy would go to a Castle school in order to learn how to be a perfect knight. It must constantly be remembered that the training of a perfect knight was in many ways a simpler process than the training of the modern captain of industry, and hence to-day the dominance of the professional teacher on the one hand and on the other the reluctance of many parents to take a very responsible part in the process.

So far the statement has clearly dealt with the handing on of traditional customs, manners, and knowledge 'up to date', and the teacher or parent who does not teach by the light that is in him, or who, through sloth or stupidity, gives false knowledge is as reprehensible as a false prophet. Any example makes this clear. A man who does not know and will not take the trouble to investigate what scientists have found out as to food values has no right to be talking on food values; a woman who does not understand phrasing should not teach music. Not less knowledge would in the ideal State be required of the teacher of young children than is required from that of the adolescent, but it would be the knowledge characteristic of the full man rather than of the specialized man.

A child may be considered to have come into his inheritance when he has succeeded in getting some share of the common knowledge of his time, but he is not adequately prepared for life if he has not such confidence and initiative as will enable him to use that knowledge and, if his bent be in that direction, to add to it. In the words of the school, he must have self-reliance and initiative. Here the work of the home and school is more difficult than in the imparting of knowledge, and it is only made possible, in my opinion, if from the very beginning a child is allowed a great share in his own teaching. It is unnatural to suppose that a child during the most plastic years of his life should be expected to accept, to do as he is



told, to keep his hands from experimenting and his tongue from questioning, and that when he gets into business he should take responsibility and show self-reliance. Modern schools are now facing the problem, but all of us have a long way to go before we shall solve it. To get the happy combination of adaptability, respect for authority, sweet humility, coupled with a sense of responsibility and initiative is no easy matter.

The realization that a child must be encouraged to create and initiate is one of the marked characteristics of the education of to-day, and there is a steady output of books of which the main object is to show parents and teachers how to teach children to do—to act, to write poetry, to run model cities, etc. The youngest of teachers now knows that passive listening is not learning, and that his class must take an active part in the learning of any subject.

There is, of course, nothing original in this view. James said it in very plain words to teachers thirty years ago, and Professor Dewey has steadily preached and practised it.

What is new is that it is beginning to come into its inheritance in the school of the more average teacher and child. In the school of to-day the child is a self-educator seeking actively for knowledge and skill that become his by right of conquest. Any feeling that knowledge is not part of the birthright of us all, that to possess or add to it is the right of any given class, is fatal to the intellectual life of a state. It turns learning into pedantry and then kills it. It is better dead.

What has been said of knowledge is equally true of sentiment and action. It is a healthy sign in modern education that authorities try to give budding citizens a pleasant feeling about the Empire by giving them a pleasant Empire Day—a short session of morning school full of songs and dances, and a holiday in the afternoon, a flag to wave and a ribbon to wear.

And it is equally healthy that we encourage children to make songs as well as sing other people's, and to look at other people's pictures as well as try to make their own.

Under all more modern practices, do they arise in the acquisition of skill or knowledge, a fundamental rule is to be

found : encourage the child's desire, let him try to realize it ; in this connection let him see how others have done it and so get help, but help for his own project which he himself must carry out.

The conclusion of the whole matter is, then, that in a modern State the school must take the responsibility of developing in the future citizens those attributes which for some reason are more successfully treated in a school than at home : the community spirit, the technical skill and knowledge necessary for a modern man—good speech, reading, writing, and number, for example. But in addition this generation of responsible people must educate the citizens of the future who will possibly need more and certainly not less self-reliance and initiative. As a sapling, so the tree ; hence a child's self-reliance and creative power must constantly be encouraged, and passivity for him must only be a rational way to achieve his own end of creation. ' To do we must know ' is the child's way of interpreting the teacher's maxim of ' to know they must do '.

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# PART I

## THE MAKING AND GIVING OF LESSONS

### CHAPTER I

#### TYPES OF LESSON

#### I. CLASSIFICATION OF LESSONS

**I**F school problems are considered in their chronological order, the actual preparation of a lesson comes very early in the list, and to the student beginning his professional training the necessity of making notes of lessons is often unduly perturbing. Now, notes of lessons should be interesting to make and useful in the class-room, and it is often in reality only a doubt as to what is needed that causes the perturbation.

Before dealing with the making of the actual notes it is wise to consider the main types of lesson—the purpose of this chapter.

The classification of lessons most usually adopted is that which uses purpose as a basis of division. A lesson is planned that the children may acquire some new piece of knowledge, or some new skill, or experience a definite emotional reaction. Thus does the classification shape itself in three distinct divisions :

- (1) the lesson dealing with the acquisition of knowledge, called shortly the knowledge lesson ;
- (2) that in which the acquisition of skill is the aim ; and
- (3) the appreciation lesson, in which knowing and doing

are but means to appreciating beauty in one of its many forms.

At the cost of making the classification even more illogical, it is wise for the young teacher to consider also a fourth type of lesson—the practice lesson, which may be given in connection with any of the other lessons but especially those aiming at knowledge or skill.

Each of these classes needs a special type of preparation that in its final form should be summarized in the 'Notes', but before consideration is given to each separately, the common characteristic of any psychologic experience should be stated.

If any ordinary experience is examined, say, reading certain pages of a textbook, it will be found that in the first place a feeling of interest or the emotional attitude of resignation, that usually accompanies an act of grim duty, causes a certain intellectual effort; then follows some act of will, as it is often called, that is, in the present case, a deliberate exclusion of other sources of experience, a settling down to the task in hand, and in addition the making of mental or written notes. Now, if these three aspects of mental life are not closely connected in any one experience, the result will be defective. No words can put this fact too strongly. Knowledge divorced from doing and interest is barren, indeed nothing more than waste mental lumber that the healthy child drops as quickly as possible into unconsciousness. Skill acquired apart from understanding is obviously mechanical and likely to fail at an emergency when it is most needed; and feeling divorced from action and unchecked by thought can easily degenerate into sentimentalism or hysteria. Consequently, to plan the knowledge lesson and leave it unconnected with a child's interests and with no thought as to the use he can make of it is to court failure; to try to give a child the power of doing any simple thing quickly and mechanically—even, for instance, saying tables—without making the mechanical process the outcome of understanding—takes longer and is a less durable possession than if practice is intelligent; in the same way feeling that cannot spend itself in action or grow through knowledge at the best fails to develop.

If, however, the teacher remembers this psychological principle and trains himself to apply it, he will find it simple to consider the actual preparation of lessons under the classification already suggested, in each case seeing that the mental act is threefold, though in each type of experience either the acquisition of knowledge or skill or the development of emotion will play the most important part. The practice lesson for the time being is in a class apart.

## 2. THE LESSON TO GIVE KNOWLEDGE

In order that the new knowledge may be acceptable the teacher must try to win over some part of the child's past experience to act, as it were, as its host. Thus, for example, if a teacher is proposing to give a class some knowledge of the conditions of life in Norway, he must search diligently to find which of their experiences have been such that by recalling them to the children he is likely to ensure a ready welcome for the new knowledge. A great deal depends on arousing the active interest, for there is no passive resister so stubborn as the uninterested child. He simply turns his mind away from the lesson and quietly goes on with his own private life. Hence in some cases the teacher must search for a new point of view from which to approach the question. It is no good beginning a lesson on Norway by pointing out its juxtaposition to Sweden if the children thoroughly disliked their lessons on that country. But if part of Knut Hamsen's *The Growth of the Soil* were read to them, or if an account were given of the life that goes on as a boat travels up one of the smaller fjords, the children's dormant interest in men and their world might be roused to welcome the new knowledge. This problem of gaining the interest and, therefore, the attention of the class must be the first solved in any lesson.

The second problem is to use the activity thus aroused to the fullest extent, and generally three conditions must be fulfilled :

(a) the knowledge which it is hoped the child will assimilate must be a further development of that past experience which served as a host ;

(b) there must be a path of progress through the lesson,

and the normal child should see that by following it he will satisfy the interest aroused in the introduction to the lesson ;

(c) the lesson should add to the child's orderly store of knowledge and hence should as far as possible be associated with those parts of his past experience which are akin to it.

Taking these conditions in the above order, it follows from (a) that the failure of many teachers to hold the attention of the class arises from the fact that the children are disappointed at the material that is given them. Either they see that in spite of the fresh introduction they are really being offered ' the same old stuff ' or else they find the new unintelligible. Thus, to go back to the geography lesson, one can recall many lessons that began quite well, the story of the little calf hauled on to the fjord boat, the bilberries labelled for Newcastle, the fish for breakfast, dinner and supper at every hotel, the electric light in the humblest wood cottage ; but then, alas ! the introduction ends and the teacher briskly proceeds to the dead facts of the textbook and the children realize the best part of the lesson is over. Now if the travelling by boat had led to an explanation of the enormous importance of the fjords in Norwegian life, not only as waterways but as fisheries, and the story of the men fishing night after night in the fjords had led on to an account of a great river with its salmon, a lesson on the waterways of Norway would have been given that proceeded steadily step by step, and that gave material necessary for a more scientific summary later in the course ; and it would have been given in such a way that the class would attend and remember.

(b) The above example also suggests what is meant by a path of progress—a line of thought has been the guide, and facts have been excluded however interesting that would lead too far from that line. A lesson is in reality a work of art and it would be unwise to suggest that the digression is always a mistake ; for one thing, if the lesson has become dull a digression may be extraordinarily arousing ; it may even show a better way than the teacher had suggested in the introduction, but on the whole it is wiser for the young teacher to make his plan the night before and abide by it. The



artistic setting for digression is talk, and much real talk between teacher and taught should take place, but not necessarily in the prepared lesson.

(c) In his zeal to make lessons a real part of the child's experience there is a danger to the teacher of adding to the chaos out of which a child furnishes his mind. It is probably this fear of an unsystematic result that makes most people abide by the line laid down in the textbook, proceeding in a lesson on Norway from Relief to Water Systems, and so on. But in doing this a teacher is forcing on a child an arrangement that is the result of much first-hand experience on the part of explorers, much scientific work on the part of geographers. Just as it was shown earlier that skill apart from knowledge is of doubtful value, so, until the reasons for it are appreciated, a scientific classification of subject-matter brings no order into chaos.

A great deal is written on the problem of psychological versus logical method of procedure in teaching, and to a certain extent teachers have been forced to come down on the side of psychology. But they often seem half-hearted about it, and at the slightest excuse hark back to the methods of expounding knowledge that are observed by the writer of the accepted textbook on the given subject. Now a child does not think in the way of the adult; to a far greater extent he needs concrete data on which his mind must work and with which he will eventually interpret the classifications and explanations of the scientist.

How then can it be ensured that such varied knowledge does not add confusion, if the usual lines of procedure laid down by the expert are for the great part ignored? It cannot entirely, and the teacher who declares that his class have orderly minds is simply labouring under a delusion. Most minds seem to collect a great deal of diverse and unclassified material and out of it to make their own pattern. All the teacher can do is to see that he does his part in as orderly a way as is possible, connecting new material with old and seeing that, if it can be associated with more than one kind of experience, the association is made. For example, the class that was told of the salmon for breakfast, dinner and

supper in Norway could be told also of the clause inserted in so many Elizabethan apprentices' indentures as to the maximum number of times salmon was to be given them in a week. Such an illustration is not a digression—it is introduced purposely to drive home the point of the dependence of man on his environment for food and livelihood, especially in simple societies. Such teaching makes for system and is what is truly meant by the 'correlation' of knowledge. The key to it is often merely the simple statement, 'This is like so and so!'

In many books on teaching methods, plans are given for breaking up the information to be given into parts, each of which shall act as a step to the next. There is no royal road to preparing an orderly lesson, but the method that has helped many teachers is one by which the material of a lesson is thought over as though it were to be put in the form of a short essay or a chapter of a continuous story. Then it must proceed paragraph by paragraph and each must have a vital connection both with those going before and those following after. In a later chapter the uses of comparison, illustration, and questioning are discussed.

Thus the main function of the knowledge lesson must be fulfilled, and in seeking the means of fulfilling it, the teacher is compelled to consider the subsidiary but essential emotional attitude, that of interest. An illustration has already been given of a method taken to arouse the emotional attitude, and it was suggested that to gain the children's interest was one of the main functions of the introduction, to sustain it the condition of success. This is not the place to discuss the conditions for ensuring interest and attention, but it may be wise for a young teacher to act on two simple principles:

(a) Interest is generally aroused in children by appealing to one of their primary instincts or innate tendencies—curiosity, love of construction, desire for possessions, a love of imitation, and so on.

(b) Once a primary interest is aroused, if the new material is presented clearly, a secondary interest in the lesson will develop, and the new interest—it might be called interest in

knowledge for its own sake—should continue throughout the normal lesson. If it wavers it is a sign that either the teacher is dwelling too long on one aspect of the subject-matter or the presentation is confused or dull. If the teacher is conscience free on both such points the probability is that the children are mentally wearied and need rest or change of occupation.

Finally, interest being aroused and thought being dominant in this form of lesson, there is the problem of unifying the mental act by linking with this interest and thought some form of action. Here will be one of the greatest difficulties in teaching until schoolmasters and mistresses break away from all the habits that survive from the time when education meant a passive class imbibing the spoken—or occasionally written—word. Teachers still aspire to impart far too much actual information to children who have neither the ability nor skill to use it except in the most formal and artificial way. Moreover, if the information is such as only an experienced man could use, then it is impossible to suggest some real use that a child can make of it. For example, all those History lessons in which the Application—merely the technical term for 'the use to be made of the new knowledge'—is to be 'The class to summarize the character of Charles I' or 'The class to write an essay on the causes of the Puritan Revolution' seem to the thoughtful onlooker only to point out the unreality of school work. How can a child of twelve judge Charles I or discriminate between the causes of the Puritan Revolution? What the Application comes to in reality is that the class re-classifies under new heads the information given in the lesson or read in the textbook. This is not a bad use of material, for at any rate there is something active for the child to do and it is far preferable to that parrot memorizing of facts which stood for a great deal of the History teaching of 50 years ago. But it does seem as if knowledge that can only be used by the children to do mental exercises, for which they are not sufficiently mature, is out of place and a far cry from that living actual knowledge that is so closely bound to action. Thus, if children had seen an historical play or learnt a ballad and were fired with the idea of making and

acting another such play for themselves, or writing a ballad, how different their search after the necessary knowledge would be, how different the practical use to which it would be turned.

It looks as though ideally the function of a teacher were to arouse such interest in a given problem that the children become anxious for knowledge that would aid in its solution. Then, by searching in books and helped by the class lesson, the children would acquire knowledge for a definite purpose that they understood—a different matter from learning a subject because an examination has to be taken in it. Further consideration will be given to this method of teaching in a later chapter<sup>1</sup>; here it must suffice to state that, whenever it is possible, the teacher is well advised to take the class frankly into his confidence as to what problem is to be solved in a given lesson and encourage them to take an active part in the solution.

While syllabuses are as they are a great deal of school work is and seems entirely useless to the children themselves, but if teachers would break away from the attitude of sanctity, so often held about school subjects, and try to see history, geography, literature, from the child's profane point of view, there would be greater activity to reform Boards of Examiners and a greater desire on the children's part to acquire learning.

### 3. THE LESSON TO GIVE SKILL

Here the problem is different and less difficult, for children can realize what they should be able to do, and in most cases will be quite willing to do it. Children take delight in deeds, and with few exceptions hail any kind of handwork lesson with relief. But there are pitfalls also, and certain conditions must be fulfilled if the lessons are to be successful.

- (1) The class must see some reason for acquiring skill.
- (2) The task that is set must not be too difficult nor must the accomplishment require an undue length of time.
- (3) The standard of work must be such that by steady

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter VII (p. 84).

application a child can approach to within a reasonable distance in a reasonable time.

These points must be considered more fully.

1. The reason for the skill is on a par with the reason for acquiring knowledge, and very often the best way of convincing children that they must make an effort to acquire a new skill is to give them something to make, which they would like to possess and which, at the same time, necessitates their learning a new process. Thus, for example, children must sooner or later learn to paint to a line; they want to paint a picture for a school exhibition, and the Art teacher takes the opportunity of getting the necessary practice in the clean laying on of colour. A little girl is dressing her doll in 'woollies', and the teacher shows her how to turn a heel or to do 'ribbing' for the bonnet or the frock, as the case may be.

Children need many kinds of manipulative skill, and the first thing to do when preparing this sort of lesson is to find some reason for the children's work; if no reason can be found except that it is in the syllabus, the probability is that it should not be there. How absurd, for example, seems the making of many garments that girls suffer from in some schools, garments that never will and never need be made out of school. Necessary sewing can be learned in simple ways and on the modern type of clothes. In all cases it seems as if the spur of interest in the result must be there, and that the essentials of the craft must be taught as they are needed.

2. That the task should not be too difficult or take too long to accomplish seems to follow from (1), but there is a tendency to forget how difficult it is to acquire a new skill. Thus many people have entirely forgotten when or how they learnt to read, and they tend to think the child should find it easier than he does. The delightfully informal teaching, that prepares the way for the final effort, consists in nearly all cases in giving the children a knowledge of the written word for some practical purpose or game of their own—their own names on the board, the painting PINS on a tray for the mother, the fitting of nursery rhymes to nursery pictures. Such tasks are neither too long nor too difficult, whereas often a First Reader contains a story that might be bearable if the

child could read most of the words with ease, but is incomprehensible to the child struggling with the difference between *p*, *b* and *d*.

Again, a sew-and-fell seam in order to join two pieces of stuff for a dress for herself, may be worth while to the girl and certainly gives practice in sewing, but when the seam is that of a long nightdress the work becomes sheer boredom and there is no incentive to finish it. Most readers have, according to their sex, wasted many hours dawdling over a long seam, the leg of an unwieldy sock, or the making of soap boxes.

A young worker must desire the end for which he is working and must be able to see it not too far off.

3. But perhaps the greatest divergence of view between teacher and taught lies in the attitude as to what is 'good enough'. A boy was expected to clean the boots at home daily, and one day his mother said to him: 'John, you have not cleaned my boots to-day.' To which John replied: 'No! I looked at them and thought they were quite clean enough.' And in that story lies the whole difficulty. It is a difficulty that cannot be avoided, but understanding and compromise will prevent a clash of opinions. In the first case the teacher must remember that children are children, with children's clumsy growing hands and children's eagerness for the end. Ten minutes of 'chalking' seems a long time to a little girl aged seven, and she thinks she has worked slowly and carefully.

In the second place, a teacher must realize a child has no standards of technique—he wants to get the work done, and if the little cart runs on its wheels that is all he cares for. The teacher, then, must supply standards, and that means a collection of well-made things in order that the class may realize how beautiful pastel work can be, what excellent results can be had from the darning stitch. Most children are expected to draw or paint well, and yet they are never shown beautiful drawing, sometimes never even the teacher's. Mary's is held up, but Mary is too much like a prophet in her own country. If only more picture exhibitions for the whole school were organized, when children saw each other's work

and judged it ; if only the work of the upper classes was more often seen by the younger children, and the elder children were taken to see more professional work, there would be a heightening of standards and an eagerness to do better.

Finally, the teacher's attitude is all-important. Though he does not scold for bad work, he must love and seek good work, and the children will know it ; and thus is a standard set.

#### 4. THE APPRECIATION LESSON

The safest ground from which to approach the problem of the Appreciation Lesson is a study of the spirit that is manifest in the play of children. In play, joy in the doing and an amazing power of losing the self in the act, are the chief characteristics. This spirit of joy and self-forgetfulness must be present if the play is to be real, and not an educational game. Hence, play is an attitude towards an experience and not a specified feeling attached to certain experiences generally called games ; one child can play at being horses and forget himself in the game, while another child may be only working at it because she has been told to do what her little brother desires. A good many educational plays are of this sort, and unfortunately a good many so-called appreciation lessons are also. The real appreciation lesson should continue the earlier delights of children—their love of rhythm, colour, story, impersonation ; and the atmosphere of the lesson should be one of happy absorption. Here no solution of a problem is demanded, no acquisition of a definite result. Here what is wanted is that the children shall realize what enjoyment can be given from what are commonly called the Arts, though in reality æsthetic appreciation can be a reaction to a well-made argument, a skilfully demonstrated experiment, or a piece of practical ethics.

How is the teacher to ensure this attitude in his class ? He cannot, he can only do his best and have faith in the appeal of whatsoever things are beautiful.

But certain conditions can be stated that should be taken into consideration :

- (1) The teacher should enjoy the lesson.
- (2) The acquisition of knowledge or skill is often an excellent

method of heightening appreciation, but neither knowledge nor skill implies appreciation, and must not be taken as a test thereof.

(3) Appreciation can only be tested by its fruits, and the fruits are the reactions of the learner to future experiences, especially when away from the influences of school.

The condition stated first is undoubtedly the justification for specialists in all teaching of the Arts. There is no more important psychological principle than that emotions are contagious; a child sees another afraid, and he fears; laughing, and he laughs. Far more than their elders realize, do children feel and participate in their moods, and if a teacher gives a music-lesson because he must, the children will have it because they must. Worse still when a teacher says a thing is beautiful when in reality he does not care one jot for it, for here is born the greatest enemy to appreciation—hypocrisy.

2. A child likes simple melody, marked rhythm, and bright colour, but these childish loves may die if they are not directed to more subtle experiences. Appreciation must develop, grow stronger and more sensitive if it is to live, and it will grow by what it feeds on. Now to most people to know more about an art is to love it more, but if the knowledge is thrust on them before they need it, or thrust on people whose love does not grow that way, knowledge does more harm than good. Teachers by their very calling tend to over-estimate knowledge and technical skill, and it is salutary for them to hear some one else's pupil state frankly how she hated the analysis of a poem she liked, the music she enjoyed.

It is possible the teacher disliked the analytical process also, and only did it because she thought it her duty; in which case the class caught a feeling of dislike and perhaps of duty. 'Come with a good will or come not at all' is as wise a call to the boys and girls coming to an appreciation lesson as it is to play.

It is hard to give counsel as to useful procedure on so difficult and so personal a matter as this type of lesson, but the beginner is on safe ground if he tries to hand on his own joy in beauty, tries to keep the atmosphere of the lesson free



and happy, and seizes every opportunity that the children offer of widening their interest, deepening their knowledge, or improving their skill. Thus, in teaching children a song which they enjoy they must learn where to take breath, and this necessity makes an excellent beginning for a knowledge of musical phrasing. A member of the Matriculation Class is bound to struggle with the problem of essay writing, and his special difficulty may be the monotonous sentence always seeming to end with a tail too heavy for it. He needs to learn how to vary the sound of his sentences, and his teacher, in addition to giving him help when he returns the composition, sends him to re-read a Dissertation upon Roast Pig that he had in the literature lesson. The boy reads with heightened interest, because now he realizes in some degree the skill of the writer. Much appreciation is often gained by becoming a sedulous ape.

3. It is a pity that as soon as teachers enlarge the scope of training it seems inevitable that some new sort of test should be evolved. To enjoy a school concert is exactly the same kind of experience as to enjoy one at Festival Hall. Why should the child be tested and the adult go free? The heightened receptivity, the absorption of the self in an impersonal experience—these are ends in themselves. The only true test is the place that music, literature, painting, play in life, and time only can show that.

'But oft in lonely rooms and 'mid the din  
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them  
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet  
Felt in the blood and felt along the heart;  
And passing even into my purer mind  
With tranquil restoration.'

Such tests are set by life and not by examiners.

Nor is it wise to probe too insistently into the results of the actual lesson, at any rate until psychology has declared much more clearly what stimuli will heighten, what depress, the love of beauty. 'Why do you like it?' said the earnest teacher. 'Because my father keeps doves,' answered the child who has given 'the moan of doves in immemorial elms' as her favourite line. Later in the lesson the child realized

that the teacher was thinking of pleasing sounds, and she gave pleasing sounds—or moderately pleasing—with a will, only too anxious to do something to oblige her teacher. This road leads to hypocrisy and to lip-service and away from real self-forgetfulness.

### 5. THE PRACTICE LESSON

‘Practice makes perfect’, and it is this sense of practice that is implied in ‘Practice Lesson’—a not entirely satisfactory term. This form of lesson is obviously apart from the classification into three main types according to the aspect of the mental act that is most to the fore. The practice lesson may be an aid to the knowledge lesson or to the lesson on skill and even to the appreciation lesson, but in every case its function should be to make more definite the lesson which it follows. Thus a class has had their first formal lesson on the use of adverbs, and the teacher will find it very necessary to devise an ‘application’ or use of the knowledge if he wishes the class to remember it. Similarly, it is one thing to know how to sound  $\frac{1}{2}$  but quite another to be able to do it; one to understand how to divide a decimal by a decimal, quite another to know it so well that it is never forgotten.

It might be argued with much justification that the Practice Lesson is only a form of the application, and need not be considered as a type of lesson by itself. But so much practice is often needed to ensure the desired result that in most subjects lesson after lesson should be devoted to practice, and this sort of lesson needs a procedure of its own. Firstly it gains by the straightforward application of its name. For example, there is everything to be said in teaching Arithmetic for presenting it as a series of real problems that the child has to solve. But as well as an ability to see through this type of problem to the simple fundamental truths underlying it, the child must acquire ability to deal with numbers accurately and quickly. This ability is the result of long practice. If the teacher faces this fact and gives definite periods to such practice, the resultant work will be far better. Now a practice lesson should mean the working of example

after example of increasing difficulty. There is often no point in adhering to the problem form, for there are not such an enormous number of sensible arithmetical problems for children to solve, and it is absurd to make up problems on the cost of twenty pianos. The children have found out how they can discover the cost of the whole school journey, or the value of the stock in the class-room; the teacher then shows that the need of the moment is accurate multiplication of money, and the class realizes that such sums are beyond their scope until they can multiply with machine-like accuracy. Then the practice period must begin and should surely continue until the required facility is attained. There is no hardship in this kind of lesson if children are treated as reasonable beings and asked to co-operate in attaining the required skill. But here the test is in the doing and once a child can multiply with accuracy he should not be kept at doing harder and longer sums than are reasonable because others in the class still need practice.<sup>1</sup>

In the same way, in a recitation lesson, that itself should be the application of the literature lesson, the children must at their own rate and in their own way memorize the words. Such lessons should be preparation for a concert or play, but they are practice lessons nevertheless, and should continue for each child until he is word perfect. Every subject needs a fair proportion of this repetition of a process, and the young teacher constantly fails in his teaching because he has too few practice lessons. He fears they are drudgery for the children, and scamps them. But in the first case it must be remembered that the average child does not think in terms of drudgery, and does not dislike practice if the end to be attained seems to him sensible.

And, secondly, he will find life much more depressing if he is let off, say, the memorizing of tables, and constantly gets his sums wrong, or finds he has forgotten how to do Long Division when he needs it for Simple Interest.

There is then no reason why the practice lesson should be

<sup>1</sup> For methods of dealing with the problem of the varying rates at which children work, see p. 76.

uninteresting, but the teacher must use skill and discrimination in winning the children over to make every effort to use the time to the best advantage, and must make arrangements for every child to get as much as is necessary but no more.

And, finally, once the children have acquired the skill and can apply the generalization with ease, it is undoubtedly the duty of whoever arranges their work to see this effort leads on to other work and is not wasted. Hence the stupidity of making children memorize dates they do not need, spelling of words that they never write.

Just a word about 'dodges', used to make practice palatable. A mother who found her little boy very slow at Arithmetic used to tell him stories of wrecks in which so many people could go in one boat; at first he found the necessary arithmetic quite interesting. But after two weeks, when his mother proposed a story, he said, 'But no more Arithmetic games, mother!'

A game must be a real game and must be played for its own sake. The competition like 'buz', a spelling bee, a red star for children as they accomplish the table are all valuable, for they bring the desired end more easily within the child's view; moreover, children enjoy such games as games. But if the game is obviously of far less importance than the practice, and hardly worth the playing, they will fail to be interested, and if the practice has been suggested as a means only to playing that game, it follows that the practice will be half-hearted.

Hence the failure of the 'dodge' that the teacher adopts, not because he enjoys it himself but because some other teacher found it successful.

All forms of play should be real play, and it is the spirit of play and not any set form that ensures this condition. Shops, word games, verse-speaking competitions, preparation for a concert or Open Day, may all be done with such joy and concentration that the time flies for teacher and children and they would be hard put to it to say if they had been at play or at work. But a morning of such activities, though it is a tax on energy, has lasting results. The children deal with money more intelligently and accurately; they have

practised their sounds with concentrated care ; they know the words of the play ; they have printed the invitations in careful script ; and these results have been attained in the minimum of time because the children were wholehearted in their efforts. And at the bottom of every 'dodge' will be found this attempt to get the children interested in reaching the end desired by the teacher.

Such a system can be as artificial and barren as the most formal teaching. Froebel and Dewey have surely shown that the right road to Education lies through a child's interests and activities. It is only when educators fail to use the child's native interests and abilities that dodges become necessary, in the practice lesson as in any other. Given the child has an end in view he desires to reach, given he has faith in his teacher, he will when occasion demands tackle the so-called drudgery gallantly. Thus children are made.

## CHAPTER II

### NOTES OF LESSONS

**I**F the reader will go through the last chapter carefully he will find he can make his own plan for the notes of a lesson, and it will probably be for him the most useful. The suggestions that follow are merely suggestions, but they act as a summary for a long chapter, and they have been tried out in years of practice.

There are, however, two types of note ;

(a) The teacher's notes as to the amount of work covered in any given lesson, notes made only to ensure that no time is wasted and no confusion caused by a lapse of memory. Such notes all teachers should make, for they are also of very great value to other members of the staff, and to the organizer who has to see that the child's work is well planned. Most Educational Authorities ask that such notes should be kept.

(b) The second type, that with which the teacher in training is concerned, is the note that in itself is an important part of training, for it entails the analysis of the lesson step by step.

Clearly the first thing the student should do who is making notes is to decide what type of lesson is to be given—for that will give the general aim of the course and help with the particular aim of the lesson. Thus, if the lesson is to encourage appreciation of ballad form, obviously the aim cannot be to teach the children to write ballad metre. Nevertheless, the general aim of the course of lessons could be to encourage appreciation, and a special lesson might be devoted to giving the children knowledge of ballad metre and skill in using it.

Thus the first two steps in preparation of a lesson are :

1. A consideration of the main reason for the course of lessons ; in other words, the 'General Aim'. A syllabus should be made embodying this purpose before notes of the first lesson are considered. This general aim and syllabus should appear at the beginning of every new course of lessons.

2. Before beginning the preparation of any lesson of a series, a teacher should think what part it is to play in the whole course, and that should give the 'Aim' of the lesson (sometimes called the 'special aim' to distinguish it from the general aim of the course). Thus, suppose the aim of a course of six lessons is to give knowledge about the pollination of flowering plants, the special aim of one lesson might easily be to give the children an opportunity for a careful study of the two types of flower.

The aim of the course might never directly arise in this lesson or even in two or three lessons out of the six, for the great need of the children might be for definite knowledge of the various flowers that show the various methods of pollination.

3. This example brings us to the next step in lesson preparation. It is clearly essential to find out as much as possible about—

- (a) what the children know of a given subject ;

- (b) what part of this knowledge the teacher proposes to use as a foundation on which to build up the new lesson.

- (a) The pitfall for students here is that if they do not find a class responsive, or if they hope they have found some original piece of work to do with a class, they write, trium-

phantly or despairingly as the case may be, 'Previous Knowledge—None!' an entirely impossible condition from which to begin. Even the advocate in *Les Plaideurs* began from chaos, and though it may be the very first formal lesson in any subject that the teacher proposes to give, there must be something in the child's experience with which to associate this new formal work; and that knowledge must be sought out and used. For example, a student who was proposing to give a class their first lesson on Drama, wrote 'Previous Knowledge none'. Yet the class had unlimited experience of telling what had happened in the form of 'she said' and 'he said', to say nothing of the acting at cinemas.

(b) From the previous knowledge of a child some definite part or aspect must be chosen to act as host for the new knowledge which the children are to acquire in the lesson. Hence, the teacher must consider the aim he has already chosen and in the light of it decide what part of the experience of the child he proposes to use. Thus, the student giving a course of six lessons on Drama has as his general aim the encouragement of children to go to the Old Vic or Children's Theatre instead of cinemas. He might take as his special aim for the first lesson a dialogue to show how exciting and illuminating spoken conversation may be. A child's knowledge of cinema procedure and the use of captions might serve excellently as 'Previous Knowledge', for speech in drama, as in life, should illuminate action and not be divorced from it. Hence the special aim of the lesson directly affects the choice of that part of a child's experience which the teacher decides to use, and that part is technically called 'Previous Knowledge'.

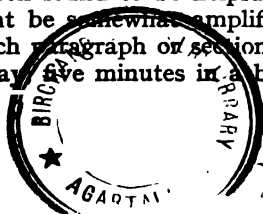
4. The next step in preparation is to think out the problem of how to begin a lesson—commonly called the Introduction. Now if a teacher has really given thought to the Aim and Previous Knowledge, there should be no difficulty in planning this stage, for in the Introduction the 'Previous Knowledge' (in the above technical sense) must be called up into the consciousness of the child, and of course called up in such a way as to arouse interest. Hence the value of basing a series of lessons on Drama on the cinema, dangerous though

it may be to the inexperienced. The children do know and are interested in this type of drama, and the suggestion that this lesson has to deal with a yet more interesting type will cause the children to give it a ready welcome. The dilemma for the beginner is that either (a) he tends to put as 'Previous Knowledge' some formal statement like 'the previous lesson' or the last play read, and fails to make use of it in his introduction, or (b) he uses it in his introduction but then ends that lesson and begins a new one introducing the main subject. Thus a young teacher will say, 'How many of you have been to a cinema?' and on finding the class vociferous on this point, will proceed, 'Yes, I see you all have. Now we are going to deal with quite a different sort of play, so listen to me!'

5. And this leads to the necessity of discussing the next step in the lesson, commonly called the Development. Obviously the development of the main theme must arise from the introduction, just as the development of a theme in an essay arises from the introduction. The introduction is not something put into a lesson to make it harder for the young teacher. Whether he likes it or not, he has to have it, and if he puts in an ornamental one to please his trainer and then ignores it, the result is that he uses one at haphazard as the real beginning of his subject. Thus, in the example cited above, the introduction is 'I am going to tell you of a very different sort of play than a cinema', and clearly if the children think the cinema the more interesting form, this introduction is not remarkably tactful.

The Development must proceed from the Introduction, and should be so closely connected with it that the interest roused in the Introduction should continue without a break to the new secondary interest which, once aroused, should continue through the various sections of the Development. It is difficult to ensure the successful development of a lesson, but the suggestion on p. 6 in connection with the knowledge lesson has been found to be helpful to students in training. Here it might be somewhat amplified:

(1) Let each paragraph or section of the lesson be reasonably short, say five minutes in a beginner's lesson.





(2) See that just as the Development proceeds from the Introduction, so each section is linked to the previous and following sections.

(3) Vary the method of presenting each section. Thus, if you have told the story of the journey of the *Mayflower* in one section, let the children look at the map of Virginia or a picture of New Plymouth, and say what sort of conditions awaited the pilgrims.

(4) Two-thirds of the lesson is the maximum time that can be given to this section, and even of that time half should seldom, if ever, be used entirely for the teacher's exposition.

(5) The last section of the lesson corresponds to the stage that on p. 7 was called the Application, and this section obviously must be almost entirely the children's work; entirely, if they have taken little share in the development of the lesson. Nor should the teacher, if he has planned his lesson carefully, be at a loss for the application, as it should be implicit in the aim of the lesson. Thus, if the aim was to make children realize the meaning of Simple Interest, the application is sufficiently obvious; if to see the difference of the two kinds of primrose, a description by pencil, or in words, of the two flowers suffices; if to realize the form of the drama, a dramatization of some well-known story. Very often under this head the note 'Children answer questions' is found. The art of questioning must be postponed to a later chapter.<sup>1</sup> And here it must suffice to say that these questions should be prepared beforehand and appear in the Notes. Equally, if the Application is that the children make a summary, the teacher should think out how this summary is to be made and what reason there is for it. It is, for example, absurd to labour over a summary that the children know they can find ready-made in a textbook.

So far, this chapter has dealt mainly with the teacher's share in the lesson, for the aim of the chapter is to give the student some help in the preparation of lessons he will have to give during his practice in school. But obviously as soon as the actual lesson begins, i.e. when the teacher 'introduces' it to the class, the class are at least of equal importance to

<sup>1</sup> See p. 41.

the teacher, and very often should be the dominant partner. A teacher cannot give a lesson unless the children will receive it, and cannot give it well unless the children are actively interested in it. The necessity of arousing interest has been already discussed,<sup>1</sup> but throughout the preparation a teacher should think what share the class is to take in a lesson. So important is it that during the preparation a teacher should always have thought for the class, that many educationists insist on two parallel columns for the body of a lesson, one for The Teacher's Work, the second for The Children's Work. This division is now rather more often accepted than the earlier more formal Matter and Method columns. Hence the usual form of Notes of Lessons is as follows:

*Class.*                      *Subject.*  
*Time*                      *Apparatus*  
*Aim*  
*Previous Knowledge*

<i>Teacher's Work</i>	<i>Children's Work</i>
Introduction	
Development	
1.	
2.	
3.	
Application	

Columns or no—and personally I do find the division useful—it is clear that very careful thought must be given to what the children will be doing, otherwise the teacher will find use for Viola's words: 'I can say little more than I have studied, and that question's out of my part.'

The tendency of the student both when preparing lessons and then again when giving them, is to pay pen-service to the form of notes by putting in an occasional entry into Column II, as 'Children listen', 'Answer questions', 'Look at a map'. But unless the questions are so arranged that they really make the children think, the inspection of the map so purposive that the children are entirely concentrated

<sup>1</sup> See p. 2.

on it, there is not enough for the children to do. It is not a bad plan for the beginner to punctuate each section of the lesson by a piece of work that the children must do for themselves. For example, a hectographed set of questions, the answers to which form a summary, is an excellent way of training children to take notes, and might make a good Application to a lesson of which the children could not get the material from a textbook, material for which, of course, they had a real need.

So far these suggestions have been mainly concerned with preparation for the knowledge lesson, but *mutatis mutandis* the application is fairly obvious for the other types of lesson. It must be remembered, however, that whatever type of lesson is given, the tripartite character of the mental act must be accepted. Thus, in the knowledge lesson, while aroused curiosity will supply the necessary interest, arrangements must be made for action. Better still, as children are men of deeds, some desire to do should rouse interest in knowledge. In the Appreciation Lesson, the heightened interest in some form of beauty—the aim of the lesson—should be used to carry the children a step further. Thus the application for a lesson on one of Corot's pictures might easily be that the children should look at one or two specially chosen pictures to see how those artists looked at trees, or select from a group of unnamed pictures those of Corot. Again, where the aim is to give the children increased skill, interest in making something they desire should satisfy the emotional need of the child, and knowledge should be the handmaiden to help towards attaining the new skill. Here the trial and error method is the safest—a child tries and finds he can't do and then demands that instruction which he needs.

The Practice Lesson is in a real sense, as was said before, but the continued use of a piece of knowledge or skill already given. In preparing such a lesson the Introduction must arouse in the children a desire to do their best to improve, and then, the less said by the teacher and the more done by the children the better. Nevertheless, careful notes may be very essential. For example, to return to the lesson described on p. 14, the teacher must have made beforehand the sen-

tence into which adverbs are to be added ; he must have found a passage in the reading-book which is suitable ; he must have a list of adjectives from which adverbs are to be formed. And always a beginner must look out the examples that are to be worked in the Arithmetic lesson, see they do give the practice required and that they are graduated in difficulty.

Finally, it must be remembered that the real lesson is a living experience shared by teacher and class, and that no one can lay down hard and fast lines for growth. Thus, though it is wise to keep to a set form, there are many cases when the form will not contain the living experience. For example, constantly, the application stage runs parallel with the development stage ; sometimes, as in a story lesson, the application may be omitted ; often, as in the practice lesson, the teacher has very little part to play ; another time, even in a lesson to teach a new skill, the teacher's demonstration may take the major part of a lesson, but this is a dangerous practice for the beginner and generally results in some brave child saying, ' Teacher, may we try to do it ? '

But whatever the lesson, however its form varies from that suggested here, it is fundamental to remember that it is the result on the children that is all-important, and by that result and that alone must it be judged.<sup>1</sup>

### CHAPTER III

#### THE ART OF GIVING A LESSON

**I**T has been impossible to discuss the preparation of a lesson and the notes thereof without constantly referring to the actual giving of the lesson. Thus the necessity for abiding by a plan and avoiding digressions, the importance of keeping the children at work and always active co-operators in a lesson, have already been suggested.

<sup>1</sup> Readers are advised to consider very carefully the specimens of notes of lessons given on pp. 179-81, and to compare their form with that used in their own college.

There are, however, certain technical problems in teaching that can be more easily solved if they have been considered before the first practice takes place. Clearly a case could be made for dealing with class teaching in the next section of this book—Problems of the Class-Room; but perhaps as much can be said for the student who has been thinking about the preparation of a lesson turning his attention immediately to the conditions that make for success in the giving of those lessons that he has prepared with such care.

It may be useful to warn intending teachers at once, that success in teaching cannot be ensured but it can be made more probable if they will not trust to a pleasing personality, that may have often served them well, or to chance that has occasionally done so. To be a *persona grata* to children does not always make for good teaching. Teaching implies an active search after new experiences and improved standards of work, a search in which both teacher and class take part. Hence the delightful facility some people possess of keeping children quiet and happy is useful as a background to teaching, but it is not teaching.

How is that co-operation in learning to be attained?

To a great extent the success of the given lesson depends on the normal life in the class-room—the subject of the next section of this book—and here, to simplify the matter, it is assumed that the class is orderly, averagely interested in school work and quite prepared to give the new teacher a chance. It is also assumed that the teacher has prepared the lesson to the best of his ability and that it is suitable for the age and capacity of the class.

Such conditions being favourable, teaching to a very great extent is like any other art,—learnt by practice, and, as in all cases of learning, some people need far more practice than others. But equipped with good will to learn by mistakes, with real interest in children and genuine intellectual interests, any person can eventually become a good though perhaps not a 'born' teacher.

Practice, after all, is valuable because it gives experience, but that experience can to some extent be handed on; this truth was at the back of the Council of Education's mind when

the first training college was founded; at the back of the Board of Education's mind when twelve weeks' practice in the schools was declared to be the minimum for those students who went to a training college before they had any experience of teaching; at the back of a writer's mind who embarks on 'A First Book on Teaching'. It is not that other people's experience can take the place of practice but that it can, and very often does, shorten the time a young worker takes before he becomes an average teacher and can proceed with his own training along his own lines—for in a very real sense one trains all one's working life.

Years of experience tend to make mankind cautious about generalizations, but perhaps the following are the safest that can be suggested and, it is hoped, among those that are useful to the beginner.

- (1) Know exactly what you are going to teach.
- (2) Organize to the last pencil.
- (3) Make the best of all apparatus that can be easily obtained.
- (4) Teach the whole class.
- (5) Try to be serene and natural.
- (6) Remember the test of good class teaching is class working.
- (7) Use the children's knowledge whenever possible.
- (8) Notice faults but do not comment on them.
1. Know exactly what you are going to teach.

This statement is of course implicit in careful preparation of a lesson and yet it is not uncommon to go into a class-room and find carefully prepared notes that show promise of a better lesson than is going on, merely because the teacher does not know exactly what he is to teach. Thus, to take simple examples, in a story he will confuse the plot and have to say 'I forgot to tell you', in a Geography lesson he is not an expert at his map, in the Arithmetic lesson he has not worked out his demonstration and some absurd difficulty that he would have seen through in two minutes the night before now balks him. The result is that a sensitive teacher gets agitated and the children feel unsafe with him and even unwilling to work. The actual material for the lesson should

be known so well that the teacher can give it with easy confidence and have all his attention for the reactions of the children.

2. Organize to, the last pencil.

This is on a par with the 'keep your powder dry' school of philosophy, and it should be unnecessary to have to say the same things so many different times and in so many different ways. But it must be said again to the inexperienced. Dozens of otherwise good lessons have been spoilt because the teacher has thought the map would be in the room, that the children would have pencils, that chalks or paper were in a cupboard. And the height of the difficulty is reached in a handwork lesson where a good ten minutes can be wasted because the material is not ready, or no plan has been made for giving it out quickly. If the reader turns back to the form of Notes of Lessons given on p. 22 he will find a heading Apparatus. When preparing he must think out everything either he or the children will need during a given lesson and, before that lesson, make quite sure it is all there. Students in training are expected to give fewer lessons daily than the fully-fledged teacher in order that they may have time to train themselves in these points that are essential to good teaching. An intelligent student should never be caught twice because he has not troubled to verify his assumption that the apparatus needed for a lesson is in the class-room and easily accessible.

3. Make the best of all apparatus that can be easily obtained.

This also seems obvious and yet a good many people have given lessons on the Lake District and entirely forgotten that there is a picture of Derwentwater in the school hall, on an Elizabethan town without using the picture in the history book, on decoration without discussing quite good patterns on the tablecloth or a child's dress. Some beginners seem to think they are not doing their best unless they make fresh illustrations for every lesson, whereas others think unless the necessary illustration is just to their hand they must do without it. Both err: it is better to train children to get all they can from the pictures, books, maps, etc., in the school; it is stupid to try and give a lesson to children in a city school

on the orchards of Kent without a picture, just because there is not one in the class-room.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. Teach the whole class.<sup>u</sup>

This is so essential that any skilled teacher will have a series of aphorisms to give to the beginner, the wisdom of which lies in the fact that they give essential conditions for teaching the class and not a section thereof. Among the most important are :

(a) Stand in such a position that you can see all the children in your class. (And never cling on to the front desk.)

(b) Don't begin until the class has settled down from the previous lesson.

(c) Speak slowly, clearly and distinctly. (But never shout.)

(d) See that your blackboard is in the best possible position. Clean it before the lesson begins and use it whenever it will help the class to see as well as to hear. Write clearly, and don't fall into the usual beginner's mistake of writing too small.

(e) Don't distract the attention of your class from the lesson by fidgety personal habits—walking up and down, playing with a button, fussing with things on a table.

These and many other 'tips'. And indeed in his journal at night the teacher should add to this list 'do's' and 'don'ts' that in his own experience have helped or hindered his class work.

But when all is written, it is an extremely difficult thing to give an ideal class lesson, and those of the best teachers only approximate more closely to it than those of the beginner. In a real sense a teacher may be compared to the conjurer who surprises his audience by keeping ten balls in the air at once. The teacher has to encourage forty minds to think of the same subject during a given time, minds that have different previous knowledge, different interests and work at different rates. And as the conjurer must be aware of each of the balls, so must the teacher be aware of each of the class, now giving a word of special help to one, now asking the question that will make another try to think out a diffi-

<sup>1</sup> For further suggestions on the use of illustration, see pp. 33-40, 62.



culty, now, perhaps with that all-seeing teacher's look, checking Mary in her zeal for tying Kate's hair ribbon. And all such supervision must be done as unobtrusively as possible, for the lesson is the thing and the supervision of the class but a means to an end.

It sounds alarming, but as a matter of fact if the lesson is carefully prepared, suitable to the class and given in a business-like and cheerful way, the average child in the average class attends.

5. Try to be serene and natural.

This, of course, is a counsel of perfection for a beginner who needs confidence more than any gift. But the more nervous a teacher, the greater the need of preparation and very careful organization, since small things, such as the class not having pencils, will upset him and prevent his appearing calm and assured; whereas if he goes to his lesson with the knowledge that he is prepared for any emergency he will more easily attain that serenity which is so necessary to all who deal with human beings. If the reader has ever learnt how to do anything like riding a bicycle or learning a difficult dance he knows how often an instructor says, 'Don't hurry, there is plenty of time.' So it is with teaching. If the young teacher would begin quietly and not allow himself to become flustered, half the battle would be over. This training in serenity is as necessary for the teacher as an individual as a member of his profession and he should act on the James-Lange theory of emotions which declares we are unhappy because we cry. Undoubtedly to a certain extent the assumption of calmness, the quiet voice, the steady speech, the kindly acceptance of obstructions help greatly to induce serenity in the teacher and so in the class.

Being natural is to a great extent the result of losing oneself in work. It is undoubtedly a great ordeal for a certain type of student to feel forty pairs of critical eyes are inspecting him. But the inspection hardly lasts a moment, if the lesson is begun well; and in any case it is so important to get the class to work that, fortunately, the moment the real lesson begins the teacher has no time to be self-conscious—or should have none. Certain people are far more worried by this

form of nervousness than others, but the more one is worried—nay, tormented by it—the more important it is to turn thought resolutely from the self to the work in hand. Curiously even unself-conscious folk take on ‘airs’ mainly in imitation of some teacher whom they respect. It is not wise. A false brightness, an assumed cordiality, an adopted professional air may for half an hour or so cloak the nervous beginner, but children are uncannily sensitive to this sort of acting and see through it. Hence it is better to be one’s natural, youthful self. And, above all, never to patronize or talk down to a class.

6. So much was said in the chapter on the preparation of a lesson on the necessity of finding work for a class that it is hardly necessary to stress the point here. However, if a teacher finds himself unduly nervous at the thought of his first lessons, he will find a ‘sedative’ in the knowledge that he has prepared so much work for the children to do that there will be little time in which their attention will be concentrated on his own performance. Also if for some reason a class gets over-excited, the blessed air of peace that descends on the room when they are given something definite to do is a revelation to the beginner.

7. The suggestion that a teacher should welcome contributions from the class and embody them in his lesson seems to clash with the advice that the wise beginner abides by his notes. As most children love to talk and some like the limelight, there are a good many interruptions—especially to the uninteresting lessons—in the form ‘Teacher, my brother went on a ship’; ‘My father saw a big boat’; these comments do not necessarily help towards the aim of the lesson, even when it is that of an expert teacher. But it is quite common for a child to have first-hand experience; of the hop fields in Kent, of the orchids growing in chalk-pits, of the working of a surface coal-field, of a foreign country. In such cases the answer: ‘Yes, but listen to me now’, is really throwing away an opportunity of making the lesson real.

First-hand experience is always interesting, and if the children are encouraged to contribute what they can to the

knowledge of the class they are more alert and more active co-operators in the search for knowledge. Children vary in their power of interesting a class and no one should be encouraged to be a bore; but with practice a teacher learns how to use the child as a co-operator and it is an excellent lesson to learn. To no great extent can it be learnt outside the class-room, though if the reader remembers his own childhood and recalls how snubbed he felt when he ventured information that was rejected, what a delightful break it was when the boy from Canada told of the grain elevators, he will have some guidance on this point. That class teaching must be class working is the other condition to be fulfilled and that perhaps is implicit in the statement that the child must not bore the class.

8. Some young teachers are so anxious to show the class that they see and hear everything that they constantly interrupt their lessons with personal criticism of various members of the class. It is really a bad plan. Unless a child's bad conduct is hindering the work, though it is wise to see, it is unwise to draw other people's attention to it. A great deal can be done by a look that lets the child know he has been observed, for a mannerly child does not want to disturb a class—he merely cannot control his tongue. If, however, a great many such interruptions arise and the teacher must notice them, the probability is his lesson has failed to interest the children. At the moment the best plan is to give them some work they must do for themselves. But afterwards he must think over that lesson and see why it failed. This constant thought about one's own successes and failures is perhaps the only way to learn how to teach. Older people are useful because they have the power of seeing quickly what is wrong, what right, and can thus give the learner material to think over.

As a rule fault-finding is a fatal error. A bright little boy who really loved his lessons was about to return to his school after a couple of weeks' absence. He seemed depressed and as he had been kept happy by an elder sister who set him sums, gave him pictures to colour and heard him read, she expressed surprise that he did not want to go to school. 'I

do like school,' was the 'almost tearful answer, 'but it's my teacher I don't like. It's grumble, grumble, grumble.'

Fault-finding easily becomes habitual—a truly horrible habit.

Prepare carefully, keep your powder dry, be gay in the thought that you have chosen to be a teacher and that you like children; remember how fidgety and scatter-brained you were as a little child; and above all, remember that all grown-up people seemed old to you when you were a child; these counsels are sign-posts on the road to confidence, notwithstanding youth and inexperience.

## CHAPTER IV

### SOME TEACHING DEVICES

AS soon as a student makes his first notes of lessons he will find himself writing 'Describe the town', 'Tell the story', 'Question the children, show a picture, compare the characters'. Hence it seems wise to give some consideration to these tools before beginning to use them. Books have been written on all such teaching devices and here in a First Book on Teaching it is not possible to do more than deal with them very briefly, mainly in order to point out their importance as tools and to show the need of practice in using them.<sup>1</sup>

#### I. STORY-TELLING AND NARRATION

Telling a story is, of course, a form of narration, but from the point of view of professional work most teachers would gain considerably if they could perfect themselves in story-telling and then apply this art to those lessons in which knowledge must be imparted in the form of 'a narrative of events'. It is probably easier to learn the art of narration on stories, for there the atmosphere is ready-made for the

<sup>1</sup> An intending teacher should take every opportunity of practice, and all the exercises on this section—and many more—should be worked before the first school practice.

teller, the climax waiting to be found, the results spreading out like a distant view. Whereas in Geography or History events must be selected to lead to the climax and the distant horizon must be suggested.

Therefore almost the first step, or at any rate the second, in the art of teaching is to learn to tell a story.<sup>1</sup>

The following suggestions may be helpful to the beginner :

1. Always if possible and certainly in the early stages only such stories should be told as are enjoyed by the teller. There is nothing gained by telling stories the children ought to know, if the narrator finds them dull. In such cases the children will do better to wait till they can read them. The story of Tom as it is ordinarily told by a young teacher who chooses it merely as a peg for lessons on caddis-flies is a dreary affair. So, too, are English Fairy Tales or the 'Morte d'Arthur' when told by people who have no love of folk-tale or romance as the case may be.

(2) However well a story is known, it should be considered carefully before telling it to a class, and analysed into its parts or chapters. There is the introduction that is to win the children's attention, the development that is to lead to the climax, the far-stretching results of the climax to be stated or commented on, or left to silence, as the story compels.

Each section must be considered separately by the teacher and he must decide how he will deal with it. If the story is too long for one lesson the dividing point is of great importance.

Obviously this analysis is necessary, for without it there is no assurance that each section does lead up to the climax and that no irrelevant details or unsuitable phrases spoil the unity of the story.

3. Every story has its own 'atmosphere' that, though hard to explain verbally, must be felt by the teacher and suggested to the class. The tone of his voice, the choice of words, a picture, the right question or appeal to the children may be the means of giving it. Here perhaps the introduction is of the greatest importance, but step by step as the story

<sup>1</sup> It may be that the first step is to learn to read it, for to read well implies appreciation.

develops and the atmosphere changes so must the story teller reflect those subtle changes.

Crude examples may make the point clearer. Balder Dead cannot be told in a gay conversational voice; Cræsus must not be introduced as a very rich gentleman, nor must the children think of Nausica as a lady doing her washing by the river; Sir Bedivere must not be degraded to the status of a naughty disobedient schoolboy.

Nothing prevents horrible solecisms of this kind so effectively as a real love for the story. Every story worth telling has an 'inwardness', and until that has been felt it is better left untold. It is not easy to explain this feeling for a story—to say it is haunting, beautiful of form, a part of one's experience, returning again and again as a melody, is only to say that each of us has certain stories that are a part of himself and that he wishes to share with others. Hence the pity of telling those to which one is indifferent. But once the key to the story is apprehended, the telling is an easier matter and only needs careful preparation. For example, the words to be used seem to suggest themselves. Of Charles I it could be said that he mounted the scaffold like a fine gentleman, but never of Joan of Arc that she went to her death like a great lady.

4. The narrator should 'image' the story in the psychological sense of the word. To describe the mental picture of the setting, to hear the people talking and interpret their tones, to feel the mighty wind and the spring of the turf—these are the experiences that are at the roots of story-telling.

Probably all normal people have some power of imagery, though many have a greater capacity for recalling sights than sounds or sounds than touch. The story-teller and the teacher must make the greatest possible use of any power of imagery with which they are endowed. Even if the initial capacity is poor, it is surprising how great an improvement can be effected by conscientious practice.

It is doubtful if the practised story-teller can ever give such a bad lesson as the teacher who thinks a lesson is a lesson and all this talk about stories is part of modern sentimentalism. Much of a lesson does most naturally shape

itself as narration—an orderly sequence of events leading on chapter by chapter to the most important point, and unfolding a special meaning for many of the children. If there is not the story-teller's art here, then narration is a dull and barren method and the class only listens when it must. A good history teacher must acquire the power no less than the teacher of literature or geography, and practice alone gives it.

## 2. DESCRIPTION

The New English Dictionary defines description as verbal portraiture of person, object or event, and this art which penetrates into every school subject is found useful in most divergent conditions. Thus a teacher of handwork or science often gives an orderly description of his apparatus, merely to ensure careful observation by the class; a teacher of geography with or without an illustration describes a place, a biologist describes what goes on in the egg of the hen, a historian describes a scene in past time, a music teacher gets a class to describe what they see as they listen to a sonata; finally the examiner demands that the candidate 'describe the effects of the Third Crusade'.

In each case the underlying motive is to ensure that the learners get a definite mental picture of a certain experience, generally in the form of visual images, less often in audible images. So important is this imagery in certain subjects, geology, geography and some branches of mathematics and chemistry for example, that it is as great a handicap to a learner to possess a poor power of visual imagery as it is to a musician to have weak audible imagery.

When, therefore, a teacher puts in his notes 'describe the scene' he desires to give such a verbal picture to the class that they will retain a memory image of it. Clearly the first condition is that he himself has a strong visual or 'audible' image as the case may be.<sup>1</sup> Then he must patiently search for the method of transferring this image to the class, remembering, as always in teaching, that the description can

<sup>1</sup> There are, of course, other images but not so often used in school. The student should try, for practice, to describe the result of touch and taste and smell.

only be interpreted by the child in terms of his own experience. Thus a teacher describing the world to a class said it was like an orange, and the boy went home and told his father that the earth was like a large orange inside. An enthusiastic lover of mountains spoke to her class of the great walls of rock that no giant could scale, and the children drew stone walls. No teacher can prevent such farcical mistakes, because it is beyond the power of man to know the minds of his listeners, but a skilful teacher prepares his word-picture so carefully and with such thought of the class that he minimizes the chance of bad error. If he wishes the description to be lasting he must make it interesting and arresting, as did the lover of mountains who spoke about the vast walls of rock.

Now interest is a feeling that must be possessed by the describer, if the children are to gain it from him. Hence as it is hopeless to tell uncongenial stories, so is description a dead affair if the teacher is not genuinely interested in giving his picture to his hearers. Again a few very simple suggestions may help the beginner to train himself along safe lines.

1. To describe the unknown in terms of the known is, obviously, essential. But the known must be selected with very great care in order that the child shall associate the unknown with that part of his experience which will act as the most truthful interpreter. Thus a skilled geographer suggested that if suddenly in the middle of a lesson a child said to him 'What's a mountain?' and he had no time or opportunity to get a picture he would describe it somewhat as follows: 'Think of the little hill you go up as you go home. Now think what it would be like if you climbed up and up for many hours, sometimes climbing down again for a half-hour, but on the whole getting higher. After about an hour of climbing you would look down at your home and it would look like a doll's house and the people like little ants. After two hours you would be so high up you could see nothing and yet you would still have hours of climbing to do before you reached the top. And no roads to help, after a time no trees to shade you, and at last great tall rocks, perhaps snow-covered, far higher than the tallest building you



have ever seen, far higher than the hill you know, and so steep that no man can climb them. How cold you would be, how loud the wind would sound, what a great picture of the country you would look down on if you were lucky enough to escape the clouds.'

2. If it takes the expert so many words to give an adequate idea, never to rely on words alone, if a model, diagram or picture can be obtained, is an obvious conclusion. In all cases where an accurate mental image is necessary for clear thought these aids to mental sight are almost essential. Hence description in the form of word-pictures should be of the picture or map which the class can study.

3. Description in the teaching of children is a means to an end. Very few children read descriptions of country, for example, merely for pleasure. It should also be a means to an end in the lesson, and the description of a Swiss mountain means far more to a class when it is necessary in order to describe Heidi's adventures with the goats than if it stands by itself as part of a geography lesson on the relief of Switzerland.

4. As a corollary it follows that description should be brief and the children should feel a need for it, either because they are interested in what some person did or saw or heard, or, in such lessons as hand-work, because they have tried to use a piece of apparatus and want to know why they have failed to make it work successfully. The skill of the teacher in many cases lies in getting the children to realize they need the description and so to attend to it.

### 3. COMPARISON AND ILLUSTRATION

In dealing with description both comparison and illustration have been suggested as necessary aids. The child who lived in a low-lying suburb of a large town was asked to think of the only hill that he knew and as a comparison with that hill the description of a mountain was given. The geographer who was asked to supply the description said at once: 'Show him a picture,' and only proceeded to try a verbal description when it was insisted that there were moments when a picture was not procurable.

A teacher will find he naturally uses comparison, for it is a common-sense method used by all of us. 'What's a moving staircase?' asks the countryman, and the Londoner replies: 'Just like a flight of stairs, only they move up or down while you stand still.'

The condition to be observed is, of course, that the comparison is to something already known by the questioner. Thus when Lueli asked Mr. Fortune what an umbrella was it would have been more enlightening, though far less amusing, if he had answered by making a sun-protector by holding two large leaves stem to stem instead of saying: 'An umbrella when in use resembles the shell that would be formed by rotating an arc of curve about its axis of symmetry, attached to a cylinder of small radius whose axis is the same as the axis of symmetry of the generating curve of the shell. When not in use it is properly an elongated cone, but it is more usually helicoidal in form.'<sup>1</sup>

Also the comparison should not belittle or in any way spoil the object to be explained, and as the objects known to a child must be used there is a great danger of doing so if the comparison has not been considered with care. To describe a cañon as similar to a great crack in the road with a river at the bottom seems to me to take away the grandeur and majesty of a great natural feature. In other words, the comparison should not make part of the idea clear at the cost of giving a false impression of another essential factor.

It must be remembered that each of us tends to see what he knows and that in using comparison the child's experience is so limited that before using comparison the first need is often to fill up gaps in his knowledge. It is no good saying the world is in shape like an orange unless at the same time the child is induced to look carefully at the shape of the orange; the words 'in shape', applying to an attribute of fruit that is not intrinsically interesting to the young, are ignored by the youthful and somewhat unintelligent listener

<sup>1</sup> *Mr. Fortune's Maggot*, p. 183. Readers would find much interest in the account of how Lueli received Mr. Fortune's instruction in geometry.

and he thinks of oranges as he knows and is interested in them.

The problem is always with us in some form or other, but especially when relying on comparison of the unknown with the known.

Illustrations, too, have been dealt with indirectly, and their need has already been suggested. It is clear that the term covers many types of examples, their main function always being to make some idea or mental picture more clear, definite and precise.

'Examples' of the working of a rule, word-pictures, pictures (sometimes called illustrations), diagrams and maps; working models, models, analogies, metaphors are all used to illustrate a point and one of the delights of teaching is the vast range of material to be used. Probably one of the greatest aids to living teaching is the skilful use of various kinds of illustration. Each type has its proper function and, unfortunately, each type has its limitations. Thus the word-picture is ineffective if there is not past experience with which to interpret it, the model, in many cases the most adequate, gives no idea of size, the picture is in two dimensions only, the analogy and metaphor suggest more to the hearer than was desired and the extraneous matter may give rise to a wrong idea.

But whether one uses words or pictures or models 'it takes two to tell the truth', and part of the skill of a teacher lies in helping the child to see the truth that the illustration can give him.

Hence globes and models of various types of country must from the very first be associated with the world the child lives in. When he makes a model in a sand tray the teacher must constantly remind him that it is of so great a desert that it would take the camels (on whom perhaps he has ridden) days to cross. Perhaps the greatest safety lies in using models and pictures to help each other. A picture of the desert, skilfully described, can give an idea of space, an idea that a child must acquire if he is to read any meaning into much of his work. For example, a child who has made a model of a part of Switzerland to show a lake and river, and the sources of the river in the mountain, and has used

parsley to show deciduous trees and sprigs of fir to show conifers, should then compare it with a picture showing a great stretch of mountain country; and even that picture should be supplemented by illustrations of beech and conifers. In each case, whether it be the cinema, the picture, the model, map or diagram, the aim of the educator is to make the symbol so full of content that it does symbolize the real thing. Thus in all teaching of children an orographical map should be used constantly and pictures of the places that the map represents should be shown and word-pictures should be given at the same time. A child should 'read' a map in this way.

It might be advisable to raise the question as to what lessons need illustrations. The obvious answer is those in which illustrations are an aid to the right experience, but there are the border-line cases which this generalization does not solve. For example, should the class in literature lessons have pictures of the hero or in history of the chief actors? A good rule is to give pictures of those objects which are essential to a child who is making a visual image, but to refrain from giving pictures of a special incident. Thus children must have a picture of a bear, perhaps of a wood, but they can be left to imagine Goldilocks' jumping from the window and fleeing home. Illustrations should give stuff for the mind to work on but should not save the mind from making its own pictures. It follows that the less first-hand experience children have, the more necessary are pictures. A little boy drawing a picture of Moses crossing the Red Sea showed him dressed in modern clothes. A picture of an Eastern chief would have prevented this mistake. Historical mistakes and geographical inaccuracies are of course to be avoided. But when the setting of one's idea is not so important, as, for instance, in picturing the hero or heroine of a story, pictures often detract from the joy of a reader. A girl of seventeen who was a devoted admirer of Lucy had a bad quarter of an hour when she saw for the first time Fred Walker's illustrations to *Richard Feverel*, Lucy of course with a chignon and crinoline. Tell me what pictures of Alice you approve, and I will tell you your generation. Tenniel's

Alice is the only picture the parents of most of the readers of this book can approve. That is a proof of the enormous influence of first impressions and cited here in order to suggest that better, far better, none at all than poor or inaccurate pictures.

#### 4. QUESTIONING

There was once upon a time a little boy who loved the fields and the woods round his house and was full of knowledge of their lore and inhabitants.

Now he was brought up by a governess who had a tiresome way of asking questions varying in kind from: 'Are you attending?' 'Have you washed your hands?' to: 'What was the date of the Battle of Hastings?'

One day the two of them were out for a walk and the lady suddenly said: 'What is that bird?' To which the little boy replied: 'Tell me, Miss Smith, are you asking because you want to know or because you want to know if I know?'

The little boy had classified questions admirably, and in a textbook they might be reasonably called:

A. The child's question.

B. The teacher's question.

A. Ideally the children should question and the teacher answer, and the more closely this ideal can be realized in school—as it is in a good home—the better. Life in school should be so real, so interesting to the children that they are constantly trying to find out more from teachers, from their own experiments, from books and every available source. There should be far fewer cases of a teacher—or lecturer—asking: 'Any questions?' and getting silence for an answer. If the curriculum were so planned that it appealed to the children's activities and interests the children would want to follow the teacher's narration, want to understand his explanation and would say: 'What's turmoil mean?' 'How did that happen?' 'I don't understand that,' as the case might be. And one of the teacher's main functions would be to see that no over-impatient or talkative child checked the thought of the class.

The most unteachable people are those who won't say when they do not know or understand. Hence the value of encouraging children's questions and answering them faithfully. But just as a teacher must be careful that the digression does not spoil his lesson, so must he see that some questions can and must wait for an answer until the lesson is finished. He must, however, undertake to answer them later and then he must not forget. A young teacher who was trying to make a silent and apathetic class take a more active interest in work found that three or four children asked questions and the rest seemed bored while they were answered. So she dealt only with those that had to be answered (like 'What does turmoil mean?'), and left the others to be answered in a 'question time'.

Though there was a time set apart daily, the children at first had forgotten their questions, but soon not only did the children realize that they must only ask questions to which they really needed an answer, but other children found that here was some one who wanted to give them information after their own hearts and they also brought up their difficulties. It was to this teacher that the girl said: 'I think I could do these sums if you could only tell me when they are dividers, when multipliers.' That problem should have been solved years before and would have been if the child had said earlier: 'But why do you divide in this sum?'

B. Teachers, however, like parents, must ask questions. A child has a short memory especially for those actions which grown-up people know are necessary and he thinks worthless. 'Have you cleaned your teeth?' says the mother. 'Have you washed your hands?' says the needlework teacher. Such questions might be called 'Aids to memory' questions. They must be asked when necessary, but a very good test of a class of well-trained, willing co-operators is that the teacher has very few such questions to put.

The most important type of questions that a teacher should use is that used to rouse the children to further and more careful thought. Every one has experienced the stimulus of a good question, whether it be to get an answer to Torquemada's cross-words or to the friend who says: 'Well, what's

the good of doing that, anyway?'' One of the reasons that college life is so interesting is that people of equal age and very different abilities and experience are questioning each other's views, actions, opinions, principles, conventions and tastes; with the result that there are constant and daily spurs to further thought and experimental life. This type of question is for the main part brought into use by the keen teacher and the test is that it does rouse the class to thought. They might perhaps be called provocative questions.

If the reader has grasped the idea of questioning, he will be able to make his own rules for a good question.

(1) Try to encourage children to ask questions; at any rate never snub them.

(2) When you do not know the answer say so.

(3) The answer in 'Aids to memory' questions may often be very short—a 'yes', 'no', a date or a name.'

(4) In questions raising a problem to be solved, some riddle of the child's universe, it is obvious that the question is far less important than the answer; it should be short and non-committal, whereas the answer will probably be long and commit the answerer to some decision.

Thus it is no good asking this sort of question in such a form as: 'Do you think Cromwell a good or bad man?' The student who needs encouragement to think has his classification ready-made for him, and he will place Cromwell in one or other class with ease.

If, on the other hand, a teacher wished to talk to his class on Rosebery's view of Cromwell, he could easily say: 'Did Carlyle consider Cromwell a good or bad man?' for here he wants merely to recall, as quickly as possible, Carlyle's view.

'What do you mean by a good man?' asked a contentious teacher of his class, and a steady stream of answers came, slow at first of course, and in many points divergent. After some discussion he put the questions: 'What about Charles? what about Cromwell?' And left the answer for an essay period.

Hence the only safe rule for a good question lies not in the relation of the number of words in the question to those in

the answer, but that the question should be so framed as to serve its purpose.

A corollary follows on the form of the answer. It should, obviously, answer the question decently. Thus it is ridiculous to say that a training in good speech is given by insisting on complete sentences in the answer.

'Did you wash your hands?' 'No.' 'No, I did not wash my hands,' would lay a stress on the act of negligence which would cause the wary mother to look further into the case.

Nor should there be an undue consideration of supposed politeness. The insistence of Sir, Madam, Teacher, Miss, only leads to the objectionable practice of Miss Y insisting throughout her conversation on telling Miss X that she is Miss X.

Correct sentence forming and mannerly forms of address must and should be practised in other ways.



## PART II

# PROBLEMS OF THE CLASS-ROOM

### CHAPTER V

#### PERSONAL RELATIONS IN THE CLASS-ROOM

##### I. RELATION BETWEEN CLASS AND TEACHER

**T**HE first section of this book has dealt with the preparation of and giving a lesson because those are the first problems that beset the embryo teacher; but even for him the most fundamental of all conditions for happy and successful life is that he should obtain in the class-room 'the right atmosphere', as it is often called; in other words, that the relations between him and his pupils should be satisfactory. Even from a utilitarian point of view—getting the children to work and acquiring results—this condition must be fulfilled, for a teacher may be cross, impatient, give dull lessons or too much home-work, and the children will put up with it and do their best for him; indeed they forgive him his crossness, sit patiently while he bores them, if they really feel he is their friend at heart. On the other hand, a man may be a brilliant scholar, prepare his lessons excellently and fail to get a hearing, merely because there is some lack of understanding between him and his pupils. There should, however, be very few such cases and they are obvious cases of misfits. No one should become a teacher who is not interested in human beings and above all in young human beings. The teacher who is more interested in teaching History or Mathematics than in teaching children has, at any rate, no place in a school for children under fourteen, and it is really doubtful if he should be in a school at all.

'What is this "atmosphere"?' 'How is it obtained?' are questions the reader has a right to ask and the writer finds a great difficulty in answering.

The atmosphere can be described, rather than defined, as an active and mutual sympathy between the teacher and children. A teacher should not be so engrossed in giving the lesson, in making children neater or more careful, in producing a play for 'Open Day', that he does not feel—almost unconsciously—that the class is tired or worried or strained. There is no recipe for obtaining this sensitiveness, but an interest in children and an eagerness to understand them joined to experience and self-forgetfulness will in the end give the right relation. This seems a vague direction to a young and inexperienced beginner and perhaps an example of how to do and how not to do may help.

A teacher was trying to teach a new song and was balked because the class failed each time to sing a difficult interval correctly. Now she wanted that interval right and at first the children tried manfully; but being children with less understanding of the importance of accuracy than the really enthusiastic musician who was teaching them, and with far less dislike for the musical howler which they were making, they wearied before she did. What she wanted was uppermost in her mind, and at last she said: 'I shan't let you go on until you do sing this right.' The children having reached the stage in which more practice makes less perfect, sang worse and worse. Fortunately the lesson ended. Now any reader could suggest half a dozen ways by which the teacher could have obtained her end and yet not bored and even perhaps estranged her class. But only constant thought about children can prevent the making of the same sort of blunder.

Another teacher who had been playing word games and found the class getting unduly excited, said: 'Now let's play schools and Mary shall be the teacher.' Mary, of course, was a far more severe teacher than a real teacher, and the class settled down to five minutes of very strenuous formal work on nouns and verbs.

Both these teachers were second-year students in training, and both have become excellent teachers; but the second had

a more ready sympathy with children, and the first had to acquire it at the cost of greater practice.

Example after example could be given to show the importance of understanding children and the necessity of realizing how large a part they must take in every lesson.

Indeed, it is not a bad thing for a young teacher to make a fraction of which the denominator is the number of the class and teacher ; the numerator the number of the class. It may at any rate remind him how important a factor the children are in the room. No matter how important  $\frac{1}{x+1}$  is, how good his own work and preparation may be, he cannot go far unless  $\frac{x}{x+1}$  is also co-operating.

There is no room in this book to make a study of child nature, but all through a teacher's training, and his training continues as long as he teaches, he must remember that it is only by knowing children that he can help them. Just as the great artist and the great craftsman learn to understand and use their material, so must a teacher understand children. But not use them—and this statement leads to the formulation of the second condition which is essential for right tone in a class-room. The teacher is there to be used by the children, but not to use them. This, perhaps, is one of the hardest lessons for teachers to learn ; children are so friendly, so forgiving, so amenable, so open to prestige-suggestion that they lend themselves readily to exploitation.

An expert professional examiner explained that the competition for entrance scholarships to secondary schools was so keen that he had to make the tests progressively harder. The teachers in their turn had to make the school work harder, while bitterly protesting against the pressure put on the children and the absurdity of teaching them arithmetic they would not need for at least a couple of years after entrance to a secondary school.

Now the examiner maintained the fault lay with the teachers who would push the children on, while the teachers, of course, said it was unfair to the children to risk their chance of a secondary education. Leaving aside the question of

blaine, the state of affairs is only possible in a community which does not insist on secondary education for all who desire it; and only then if the pupils are of such an age that they are almost entirely at the mercy of their elders.

That the teacher is to be used by, and not to use, the children may seem to convert a very important member of the class-room merely into a living textbook. In no case could it do so if the life in the class-room was sane and normal.

«No healthy child comes into school in the morning merely to learn, and so no healthy class could use a teacher merely as a textbook. They will want his sympathy about their home affairs, their aches and pains, their birthdays and their people's birthdays; they will want help with their games and competitions as well as with their work. They should feel that in all cases of difficulty in school they 'ask teacher' just as at home they 'ask mother'.

Many of the readers of this book, indeed it is to be hoped all, remember at least one teacher who played this rôle to perfection. Nor was he necessarily the most brilliant member on the staff.

On the other hand, the statement must not be taken to imply that the teacher is to be a willing slave at every one's beck and call. To assume this is to reduce a generalization to that point at which any generalization talks nonsense. But it does mean that though a good teacher delegates all sorts of work to the class and, indeed, never does a thing for the children individually or the class as a whole that they can do for themselves, yet he never uses them to do work merely to save him time or to enhance his own reputation as a teacher, or that of the school. Again, examples may help to make this distinction more clear.

The care of the class-room, the checking of stock, the preparation of material for lessons should be almost entirely the work of the class. Because children have short memories and fluctuating standards, a teacher must oversee and occasionally remind people of their duties. Nevertheless, if there has to be much overseeing or reminding, all is not right with a class.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For the share a teacher should take in the actual teaching, see Chapter VII.

But if children are kept too long at rehearsals for a concert, or at perfecting some form of handwork in order that the school may stand well in the eyes of the neighbourhood, or if girls are made to sew with undue attention to small stitches or knit pull-overs because these garments sell, then are the teachers using the children, and then are they doing wrong. Some forms of exploitation are more common in the primary schools than in secondary. But all schools from the Infant school to the Secondary tend to exploit the clever child. For example, a clever boy going to a school where science is the most important branch of work is forced into laboratories, though it is classics that he wants; a musical girl, clever to boot, going to a school where they are proud of the scholarships they gain in Mathematics, is trained on those lines and takes Mathematics at Cambridge. But she regrets it all her life. These may be, and probably are, exceptional cases, for most people have a fund of general ability and no very marked special aptitude. But, at any rate, it is hoped that they will help the reader to see the difference between using children's energies along lines which will help the children to develop and along those which help a teacher to leisure time, or to promotion or a school to glory.

To give a child all those responsibilities that make him self-reliant is one of the most important duties of a teacher; to use him for any other purpose is utterly wrong.

To be in sympathy with children, always to respect and never to exploit them, are conditions of good work that all of us accept in theory. In practice, however, they imply so much knowledge of children, such faith in them, such daily and hourly patience that it is almost impossible to leave a day's work with an entirely clear conscience. Perhaps under these conditions some suggestions as to what other teachers have found useful in getting the right atmosphere in a class may start less experienced people on a good road.

1. In children goodness or naughtiness is often a matter of health, and if children are really troublesome teachers should do as a mother does—first look for a physical cause. It is true that a teacher must forget tiredness or aches or pains when he enters his class-room, but it is not fair to expect

children to do so. Moreover, a child often feels cross and irritable and does not know it is because he is tired or has indigestion. It is the teacher or mother who must realize it and make allowances.<sup>1</sup>

Any sources that can help a teacher to know more of the health of a child should be tapped—the school doctor's reports, talks with mothers or elder children, with other teachers who know the child's family. The assumption so often made in a good home that if a child is naughty he must be very tired or need syrup of figs is an excellent working hypothesis.

If a whole class is fidgety the fault may lie in the lesson or in the class-room, but both these problems are dealt with elsewhere.

2. Certain children in any school find school work extremely distasteful because of the conditions at home ; in one type of school it may be that the child has much to do before he comes to school, sleeps in overcrowded rooms and is badly fed ; in another, the child is used as a companion to his mother and is too often at cinemas, on show at parties or riding in a car ; some children are over-considered at home, others exploited. To get the best out of life in the class, the teacher must know the home conditions of the children. No matter what the school is, a teacher on taking up work there should make a regional study<sup>2</sup> of the neighbourhood, and in the case of a poor school pay special attention to the industries of parents and the housing conditions. It is only such knowledge that prevents unjust criticism on bad work and, worse still, unjust comparison between one child and another.

3. A teacher must remember that feelings are 'catching', and that if he goes into a room feeling cross, disinclined to work and suspicious of the class, the class will feel the atmosphere is wrong and will consequently be more difficult. Here, as in so many cases, recalling one's own childhood helps.

<sup>1</sup> An even more serious case is when children are 'no trouble' because they are underfed and ill. No teacher should let this state continue. A healthy child ought often to be noisy and slightly obstreperous !

<sup>2</sup> Most valuable for parts of the school work. See p. 119.

One of the most common recollections for most people who were brought up in close relationship with a family is that of 'sensing' worry or anger or impatience. It is, as has been said in an earlier section, one of the rewards of teaching that for a considerable number of hours of the day one's personal life is lost in that of the class; the teacher must cultivate happiness in this thought and shut his door cheerfully on the outside world.

4. Again, the teacher must remember that he is one among many, and that the tone of the class-room should reflect the feelings of the majority. Well-managed children are naturally willing, cheerful and friendly, and these characteristics, that make children delightful to teach, must give the tone to class life. It can be assumed that children will want to help each other and the teacher, that they will do what they must do cheerfully and take in good part other people's successes and their own failures. Here lies the importance of treating each child as an individual and neither praising nor blaming him for native endowments. A new teacher in a kindergarten asked a little boy to read to her. 'You had better ask John,' he replied confidentially, 'for, you see, he has a head for reading.'

This attitude that some are good at one thing, some another, and that those who are good must help those who are not, seems to epitomize the right tone in a class-room. Obviously in most cases the teacher will be the person who is best at helping and the children will go to him as a matter of course. In certain cases the children can help each other and then they will save the busy teacher. It is wonderful how much talent can be found in a class-room and in addition how much skill in training others less well-endowed, if the assumption underlies the work that those who can, help those who can't.

'I'll teach Mary that stitch, teacher; I know why she can't do it.'

'Who will teach John to sound *ng* at the end of words?' Anyone who knows class-room life can visualize the forest of waving hands. Visualize also a teacher saying: 'I think it must be Fred, for he is very good at it.' Fred, in this case, being the boy with one talent only—that of sounding *ng*!

5. Finally, what Stevenson has said of morals is equally true of the attitude of a teacher towards work. 'If your morals make you dreary, depend upon it they are wrong. I do not say "give them up", for they may be all you have; but conceal them like a vice, lest they should spoil the lives of better and simpler people.'

## 2. RELATION BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN AND TEACHER

In the previous section the children have been considered as if they formed a unit called a class of which the attitude to the teacher is a known constant.

But a class is not a homogeneous body that always responds to the same stimulus in the same way. It has, as all teachers know, its good days and its bad, days when it can do arithmetic and days when one is proud of the pastel work. Such changes a teacher learns to feel, and learns how to cheer and encourage on bad days and to spur to high standards of work on the good.

But though undoubtedly in a few days forty very different children do become a class, with a definite character of its own, nevertheless it is fatal to forget that each member has a distinct individuality that must be considered. What should be the relation between a teacher and each of these individuals?

1. First of all he should know these forty people, not only as names on his register, or as children who are good or bad at work, but as people with distinct likes and dislikes, virtues and faults. He should know which are hot-tempered but generous, which slow to anger and slow to forgive. He must know the rate at which the members of his class learn and which of them learn slowly but retain what they have acquired, which rapidly but are tenacious, and in which it is easy come, easy go.<sup>1</sup> Any special ability that a child possesses, any

<sup>1</sup> A great many of the present generation of teachers in training have been subjected to Intelligence tests and all should make a study of them. It takes more skill than the average teacher possesses to use the tests, but he should make very careful use of the results given him by the school psychologist or doctor.



special difficulty ranging from poor memory or eyesight to an unsuitable home environment should be known. But the knowledge should be shared perhaps with the child and the child's mother, very probably with the teacher to whom the child will go, but certainly not with the class or with stray visitors.

One of the most reprehensible habits of some teachers is the frank discussion of a child's faults in front of a class or even in the presence of some one who is a comparative stranger. It is doubtful if it is any wiser to discuss a child's virtues in public—at any rate there is the danger of encouraging undue self-satisfaction in a certain type of child and an equal danger of depressing the child whom it is difficult to praise. Unless it is founded on respect no relationship between two people can be permanently satisfactory, and a teacher must show as much respect to a child as he would to a colleague. He would not dream of analysing a colleague's virtues and vices in front of forty people. Why then a child's? There are, of course, cases when it is permissible to praise publicly and some few when, if not to blame, at any rate to state a child's weakness if the class can help him to overcome it. But in either case only when the teacher is sure that by so doing he helps the child. The best guide to the inexperienced is perhaps to remind him that respect, the result of understanding and sympathy, are as important in the class-room as they are in the home or in dealing with friends.

These paragraphs then might be summarized as:—Learn to know and understand children, respect them and be mannerly in your treatment of them. As a corollary it may be added that respect implies at least an attitude of equality and that it is unforgivable to 'talk down' to children, no matter how kindly is the talker.

More light may be thrown on the relationship between children and their teacher by a discussion of some types of children that at any rate young teachers find difficult.

(a) The tale-bearer.

This child has been chosen not because he is more difficult than any other child with a markedly bad habit, but because he exemplifies two characteristic difficulties—the child with

some objectionable trait that must be cured and the child that at any rate a great number of young teachers acutely dislike. How often in a company of young teachers one hears: 'I can put up with any child but the sneak.'

To take the bad habit first of all. Bad habits are more easily acquired and more easily eradicated by some children than others, but in nearly every case their origin is due either to active encouragement or passive indifference from some members of the child's environment. In the case in point probably a busy mother or teacher has listened to tales and acted on them. It is not wrong for a little child who knows no better to tell tales, to copy or to tell untruths, but it is wrong for any adult to let him profit by it, and having realized the defect the teacher should do his best to help and encourage a child to remedy the fault. This help is not easy to give, for it necessitates understanding the child. Probably in this case, if the habit is common in the school, the class must be approached and won over to the teacher's views. The individual is a different matter and must be given special study, for if a child persists in telling tales, when obviously the teacher and class are against him, there is some serious cause. It may be that home life is more dominant than the class tone, it may be he has been a monitor at too early an age and feels he is responsible for others' conduct, it may be even the combined result of a vacant mind and a great desire to stand well with his teacher. Finally, he may want to break the habit, but it is often too strong for him. It is hoped that this analysis, by no means exhaustive, is sufficient to indicate that such cases are difficult, require much thought and patience both in diagnosis and cure, and are no more cured by a teacher's moral repugnance than is a physical ill by a doctor's dislike for it.

Secondly, there is the case of a teacher's personal dislike for a certain type of child, not necessarily, as in this case, the tale-bearer.

Ideally, of course, one should have no dislikes; a teacher should presumably feel the same towards all members of his class, but unfortunately should he do so, in many cases it is a feeling of indifference! Human people are such that they

prefer some types of character to others, and teachers above all should be human. But in the first case a teacher has chosen his profession because he likes children, and consequently there will be a smaller proportion of children whom he dislikes, and, 'secondly, it is a teacher's duty to try to understand and once the reason for the child's objectionable conduct is found, it is wonderful how soon personal dislike disappears.

In certain circumstances a deadlock occurs: the child seems unable to cure the habit, the teacher to conquer his dislike, though of course it is assumed he will do his best to act as though it were not there. But children are so sensitive to feelings that they probably sense some barrier between them and the teacher in such cases—a sensitiveness that only increases the difficulty of the situation. It may sound somewhat lame counsel, but the only advice that can be given in such cases is to keep the child as far as possible out of sight, not, for example in the middle of the front row, to treat him with most careful and mannerly consideration and to hand him over, as soon as possible, to the care of another teacher.

The opposite side of the problem is the child who is extremely attractive to the teacher. Memory of one's own school days should remind anyone so vividly of the cruelty of making a child a pet that it need not be dwelt on here. Obviously it is impossible to feel towards all in the same way, but it is quite possible to act in such a way that though the class may suspect a teacher has a weakness for a given child, they at any rate realize the child reaps no advantages therefrom.

It may not be out of place to remind the man teaching in a mixed school that he may do irreparable harm to a little girl whose faults he overlooks because she is a little girl. 'He always spoils the girls', a rather uncouth boy grumbled to his scout-master. 'They can do anything and they know it.'

On the other hand, women teachers often teach the boys, actually indeed prepare their lessons with their thoughts on the boys and to a great extent ignore the girls because they

are less active and openly troublesome. And then they complain that girls are dull and less interesting to teach!

(b) The self-assertive child.

This sort of child is not so difficult and from some points of view is perhaps one of the easiest to teach, for he has energy and self-confidence. If he is a nuisance in a class—asking questions in order to attract attention, ignoring the rights of other children, he must be checked, but it is asking for trouble when a young teacher pits his strength against such a child and, of course quite easily, makes him look small. The child resents it and it is worse to have a child of that type resentful and perhaps sulky than to be bothered with his self-assertion. No one can suggest how to deal with an individual whom he does not know, but it is generally wise to give such a child plenty to do, and, if possible, some one younger than himself to help, and children who are at least his match with whom to work and compete.

It must be remembered that a boy really interested in his work or play is too absorbed in what he is doing to show off. A serious consideration of the sort of work such a child is expected to do may show the cause of the difficulty.

It is obvious that it is unfair to use such children in an emergency—an inspector's visit or an oral examination—and then to ignore them at other times. Yet there are examples of this sort of treatment.

(c) The timid child.

These are the children who make the 'good' children in the old sense of the word, that is, the children who sit silent and quiet. Such behaviour is not normal, as was shown earlier,<sup>1</sup> and if a teacher finds a child unduly self-abusive he should do his best to find the cause; in many cases it is a matter of nervousness, due to ill-health or to fear—often a result of unwise and unsympathetic treatment. For example, if a child who is naturally sensitive has been laughed at, it is very difficult to induce him to risk a second similar experience; another child who has been scolded for giving a stupid answer will be afraid of trying again and may acquire a habit of letting others do the oral work. Such children often have a

<sup>1</sup> See p. 50, note<sup>1</sup>.

very unhappy time and their home is filled with complaints of the times when they knew an answer, could do a problem and did not dare to try. Worse still are the cases when the children keep their sorrow to themselves. Whatever the cause, there are undoubtedly certain children to whom it is real agony to do anything alone in front of the class. It is worse than useless to reproach them with self-consciousness or stupidity, and it is cruel to insist on their hurrying through a piece of poetry even though the teacher knows they are word-perfect therein. Kindliness and patience are the only means of solving such problems. In a case known to the writer, a teacher agreed with a child, suffering from shyness, only to ask her one question each session and that to be one she could answer. The next step was taken when a little child, even more shy and new to the class, was put under her protection and she was told it was because she could understand and help her. This cure did not alas! work miracles, but very slowly the girl did, with great effort, conquer her self-consciousness. Any teacher who has suffered from self-consciousness will know how important it is to make a start in ignoring its inhibitions before the time when adolescence brings with it a new growth. The most interesting cure in the writer's experience was the result of a general feeling of friendliness that existed between a class and a very friendly and natural teacher. The teacher was quoting 'Here, a little child I stand' and was doubtful as to whether the fourth line began with 'Yet' or 'Here'. None of the class seemed able to help her, and she was obviously at a loss. 'Here' prompted the child, and that was the first time she had voluntarily spoken in class; and though she was never 'oncoming' she did afterwards try to share in the work. In this case the obvious gratitude of some one of whom she was fond gave her happiness and confidence. It is probable that earlier in her school life she had been frightened.

Case after case could be cited of children who need special consideration, the indifferent child, the child who is over-excitable, the child who dawdles away his life and the child with ideas and no power of concentrating; all make difficulties to teachers at some time or other. Nevertheless, a

young teacher can get a very wrong idea of children if he falls into his calling's snare of considering what is wrong with children when he should be remembering what is right with them. With a reasonable curriculum and a friendly, hard-working teacher the life of the class-room runs happily and the difficulty, that at some time every child in a class should cause, is solved by friendly sympathy and co-operation between teacher and child.

The abnormal child—the kleptomaniac, the moral deficient, the child who is physically far from normal, should not be in the charge of a beginner; indeed they should all be in special schools supervised by specially trained teachers and doctors.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONDITIONS NECESSARY FOR GOOD WORK

#### I. THE CLASS-ROOM

THE actual furnishing of the class-room is beyond the province of most class teachers, who may have to work in a badly-lighted room fitted with heavy and unmovable desks, poor cupboards and mediocre heating arrangements. That such things should not be, every student, who has considered the hygiene of the class-room, knows. But even if such things are, the teacher who takes school hygiene seriously can make the best of them. The hygiene of the class-room, for want of a better term, must be considered as one of the factors that can cause listlessness, inattention or bad work. Indeed, if a teacher begins an investigation of causes of an unsuccessful day's work, he is wise to consider the possible reasons in some such order as class-room hygiene, sequence of lessons, the probable value of the actual lessons given on that day, and finally the psychology of his class.

Such problems as ventilation, lighting, heating are obviously in the province of the specialist on School Hygiene, but there are, as it were, border-line conditions partly depending on a knowledge of hygiene, partly on a feeling for the æsthetic

setting for work, partly on a knowledge of the reaction of children to environment. It would be a useful exercise for teachers to try to analyse the effect of various environments on their power of work. Textbooks, for instance, suggest that a straight-backed chair and table of the right height are necessary for all children, yet one of the best students in a college declared all her best work was done in the corner of a settee. Much of this section has been written out of doors, the only table being a writing-pad supported on the knees. The most usually stated conditions among the writer's friends are quiet and a decent light, and yet again good students have asserted that they like the hum of talk or traffic—perhaps a case of habitual environment. A certain chemist writes scientific papers in the train from Edinburgh to London. Many men, many ways of working is the obvious conclusion, and this problem of the infinite variety of people's methods will be dealt with more specifically in a later section.<sup>1</sup> As the children must work under the conditions of a class-room, which the teacher neither planned nor furnished, all he can do is to make the conditions as suitable as possible for the majority of the class. Some general suggestions may help.

Do let the decks be cleared for action. There are many class-rooms that never seem tidy and business-like, cupboards that are disgracefully kept and yet left with gaping doors fronting the class, blackboards that have on them the remains of the last lesson, a table that is littered with things unwanted, a miserable jar filled with various flowers, with no thought of freshness, much less of beauty of arrangement; crooked pictures and dusty specimens of the children's work. These things should not be. Every one would be horrified at seeing a church that was neglected and uncared-for. Yet the schoolroom should be for teachers and children the temple of work and should surely be as clear as orderly, as beautiful and serene as care and thought can make it. On such conditions is respect based. It is incomprehensible that anyone should love some of the rooms in which he is expected to grow to love learning. Yet learning is worthy of its setting.

It may seem a far cry from loving a class-room to loving

<sup>1</sup> Individual work, pp. 78-84

learning, but if many of the readers of this section will remember how sensitive they were to surroundings—the cheerful room, bright colour, the clothes that felt pleasant, they will realize that pleasant surroundings do affect people and affect their experiences.

For this reason Sir Arthur Pearson insisted that the rooms in his home for Blind Babies should be as bright and lovely as those in a home for their more fortunate brothers, because, he maintained, surroundings would greatly affect the nurse and teachers and so, indirectly, the children.

Again, the Industrial Fatigue Research Board place a great insistence on painting factories and workshops those colours which are found to have the most beneficial influence on workers and so on their output. If in order to increase the amount of yards of cloth that can be woven per day, factories must be hygienically above reproach and æsthetically pleasing, surely it is time that teachers considered very seriously the effect of a drab, uncared-for, untidy room on children and their work. Nor need this care of the class-room take long, for all should have a hand in it. All children should, in turn, be responsible for tidying cupboards (and leaving the doors shut), for cleaning boards, putting maps and diagrams in their place. Such training is essential. Again, part of the training of every boy and girl should be in arranging flowers, and it should be as impossible for the children to see red may, lilac, bluebells and narcissi pushed together into a 3-lb. jam jar as it is to his normally sensitive elder.

## 2. SCHOOL CLOTHES

In most secondary schools and in an increasing number of girls' elementary schools, a school uniform is worn by the children. A class teacher cannot insist on this and it is doubtful if school uniforms are worth the trouble and expense to which they put parents. The underlying principle should be that every one comes to school in 'workmanlike' clothes, and that, of course, means loose, simple clothes that neither impede play nor work. The uniform for the Boy Scout could easily be adapted for school use and would work a reform in schools for boys from poorer homes. The thick unwashable



clothes that boys wear often impede both work and play, and are a real source of discomfort to class and teacher alike.

If it is very questionable whether children should have school uniforms, it is obviously out of the question that teachers should don them. Yet, again, their clothes should fulfil the same conditions, and in a real sense each teacher must have a school uniform. No child should be able to feel that his teacher is careless about the garb which he wears at school, at least more careless than he would be if appearing before an Appointments' Committee. The proviso is inserted in sympathy for those men and women who find consideration of clothes wellnigh impossible. Children realize such a failing and judge accordingly. But the teacher who thinks that anything is good enough for school suggests that idea to the children—obviously a deplorable one. Children certainly notice clothes, and are much more likely to take trouble to be clean and spruce if their teacher sets an example.

In infant schools and kindergartens it is often the custom for the staff to wear bright overalls; a set of four of varying colours gives variety and most teachers of little children have had many proofs that the children enjoy this type of uniform.

It is a great pity men's clothes are so dull and so expensive that variety is almost impossible.

### 3. CLASS APPARATUS

Some apparatus is common to many subjects, and it is with the use thereof that this section is concerned.

(a) *On the use of Class Apparatus.* Perhaps the first principle that should be realized by every one is that it is a hundredfold more valuable to use apparatus than to see some one else use it. Hence apparatus should be simple and easily handled by children. It is true that a planetarium can give a most impressive idea of the working of the solar system, but it is questionable whether many of the people who view it have any real idea as to what it represents, unless they have done a great deal of work with globes and candles. Thus it is better for children to experiment with the shadows made by a light shining on a small globe than to watch a teacher organizing such shadows on a demonstration globe.

Again, in Arithmetic lessons children should make their own measures—metre, square inches, etc., and use them. Indeed, in the case of almost any apparatus the children should try some simple form of it before they are asked to study the one that is supplied for demonstration purposes. Thus if a child has had any practice in making a time-chart for himself—say a year in his own school life or a Nature Chart for the Spring—he will understand more fully the time-chart he must help to make in his History class. No geographer-made map should be studied until a child has had some practice in making plans and maps of his neighbourhood; and unless a child has looked at his own meadow, hill and stream and tried to model them, it is doubtful whether a model of Swiss Alps can mean more to him than something quite interesting that breaks the monotony of a school lesson.

(b) *Pictures and their Uses.* Pictures should be in a different category and surely it is of first importance that they should be beautiful and pleasing for children to look at and consider. Two classes are, however, apparent, those which are hung in a class-room because they have the beauty in which the children take delight, and those which are used to make teaching more real and more comprehensible. Equally apparent is it that as far as possible all the pictures in the second class should be also members of the first; if however a picture is used as a means to an end, but is not pleasing artistically, it should not have a permanent place on the walls of any class-room. When it is needed it should be on view, perhaps for several days; at other times it should be carefully stored. For this reason there should be at least one place in a class-room where a picture can be placed safely—an additional easel can often have a permanent duty of displaying the picture of the day or week.

Most teachers assume too easily that the child sees in the picture, map or diagram what is essential. But all the amusing stories that are told of misinterpretation of picture or diagram or model point to the amazing facility with which children see the wrong thing. 'Parsley grows in Switzerland,' was the result of seeing a model in which deciduous trees were thus represented; 'the hills are covered with sugar'—the

judgment of a child who had never seen snow and knew nothing of mountains.<sup>1</sup>

And when these misinterpretations are considered the reason is obvious, for people see or tend to see what they know—the parsley, the sugar, the motor-car, and not the mountain; the ‘funny man’ perhaps, but not his sledge.

Hence the work of the teacher lies in helping the child to see the picture as a whole and with this end in view he must first ensure the child’s seeing the essential parts and then helping him to make a unified mental picture.

(c) *Diagrams.* Many teachers have come to view diagrams with suspicion, for they are easily memorized by children and easily kept apart from the real phenomena which they are supposed to explain. Thus there is probably no teacher who, when at school, did not memorize a diagram demonstrating the seasons; yet hardly one out of twenty of the adults who can still visualize the diagram, find it the least help in thinking out what is the relation of our earth to the sun at any given season.

Again, except to the very intelligent, it is necessary to draw many cross-sections of flowers or fruit belonging to a given family before the diagrammatic drawing really acts as an efficient generalization. It is, on the other hand, often maintained that because we see only what we know, a diagram will help the student to see in the object what he should see. To this category belong diagrams—or enlarged drawings—of sections to be seen under a microscope, large diagrams illustrating any process, say knitting. Even in such cases it is doubtful if the thing that is seen because we are told it is there gives the same mental training and the same joy in discovery as that which the child finds for himself, and the weight of evidence seems again to be on the side of at least letting the student try to see and to make his own record and then giving him the drawing of all he could have seen.

<sup>1</sup> Readers who have the kind of mind that sees an unhappy chicken in the map of the Underground Railway, faces in wall-paper, etc., realize how distracting it is to see one’s own interpretation and not that intended by the artist. In some way or other children constantly do this.

At any rate it is obviously fatal to put a diagram on the board and expect the class to look at their own specimen and draw it and not copy the diagram. Human nature does not allow such a method.<sup>1</sup>

The guiding principle is, therefore, perfectly clear and should constantly be in the mind of teachers using pictures, models, diagrams for utilitarian reasons : such aids to teaching must only be used as an aid to the child's seeing and understanding something for himself and never under any conditions if it will hinder individual effort and work.

When in doubt, it is wise not to use them.

#### 4. INDIVIDUAL APPARATUS

It is difficult to find terms that are entirely satisfactory by which to distinguish the various kinds of tools that are employed in a school. Here the term individual apparatus is used in the widest sense, though lately there has been a tendency to apply it only to sets of cards, pictures, etc., which each child has to master in order to acquire the art of reading, writing or number.

But all teaching demands individual apparatus, the notebook, the exercise-book, pens, pencils, chalk or colours, textbooks, handwork material, tools and so on. All such apparatus is obviously necessary for each child. In all but the primary schools one of the great excitements of a child's life is the acquisition of new books, pencils, etc., on the first day of a new session, and, in a lesser degree, on the first day of each term. Probably every reader of this book—even the most careless and untidy—made a new start and for some short time made efforts to overcome his own brand of careless work because he had a new textbook or exercise book, or a paint-box of his own.

And it is this joy of possession that must be exploited in school. The poorer a child is in personal possessions the more true is it that he can most naturally learn to respect property by being made responsible for some definite things. If he

<sup>1</sup> Students should apply this statement to all those lessons in which they show good examples of work, e.g. designs, specimens of handwork, maps of a district, etc.

loses his own pen he has to replace it or get it replaced by a reproachful teacher; if, on the other hand, he loses a 'class' pen, it is surely very difficult for him to realize he is sinning against ratepayers. And this example is in fable form and it should be applied. The probability is that if each child were supplied in the state schools with a term's apparatus and some place to keep it in, there would be far less wasteful use of it than now. Teachers would, of course, take part in the training and there would be apparatus inspection from time to time. Also as the children grew older and developed a community sense, much should be done to encourage them to respect public property. It is truly amazing how many educated and seemingly public-spirited citizens of to-day are more careful with their own electric light than they are with that of the college, school or office in which they work; who would not dream of cheating an individual and yet will defraud a public authority of a tram fare. Such an attitude should be impossible if schools and universities made the right public opinion.

In a primary school, where most of the children cannot buy their own books and obviously each book must serve more than one pupil for one year, it seems impossible to train children to care for books through this sense of ownership.

The following plan or scheme adaptation of it might be tried. Each child, of course, at the beginning of a new term will have to show his apparatus and deficiencies therein will be made up. Thus he will start fair with pens, pencils, paints, etc. There will be, in addition, certain books that all children will need and of these each child should have a copy in which he writes his name and date as carefully as he can. He should also cover such books and put what design or ornament on the cover he chooses, as does his richer brother in the secondary school. At the end of the term the books are finally inspected and the teacher puts some mark of approval on such copies as have been satisfactorily used. Slowly pride grows in a school at the long list of names of temporary owners and a boy is almost as proud of having a textbook with a long tale of readers on its first page as he is of a 'conker' with a victorious past. Obviously if the plan is being tried

for the first time, it should begin with a new set of textbooks. And in all cases as a copy gets well-worn the teacher must make allowances for this in his inspection. When a book is so tattered, so dirty, that it is a sorry object which might arouse a feeling of pity, but not a feeling of pride, it should be destroyed. But one that has been used so carefully that it has outlasted all its contemporaries should eventually find a place of honour in the school—at any rate until all who have used it have left.

If any words were sufficiently strong as to make teachers realize the unkindness of giving a child some badly begun piece of handwork to finish, those words should be used. 'I'm the fourth who has had this sock,' said a small girl, and the teacher explained her knitting was so bad that any sock she knitted must be undone, as it could not be sold. Why then knit socks? And who would try to knit well on an amorphous garment, of no use to any human being?

There are many applications of this story to be made by the reader.

This section, then, is but a series of practical applications of the fact that there is in the great majority of people a pride of possession that arises from the innate pleasure in acquisition. Through this pride a community feeling can be cultivated which in its turn should develop into a respect for others' possessions and for public property.

Such and similar plans for treating a child as an individual and not merely as one of a class need organization and thought. In an ordinarily equipped elementary school, for example, a child has nowhere to keep his possessions but a shelf under his part of a dual desk. But he can make some sort of portfolio or box in a handwork class and, with insistence, head teachers can get additional cupboard space in which each child has to put away his own things. Ideally each child should have his own table and the minimum of space for his books should be a locker of his own. Teachers should not let their swords sleep in their hands until they have obtained reasonable conditions of work for their pupils, and it is past understanding why children from better homes who have, presumably, better chances should need brighter, cleaner,

better furnished schools and be allowed more apparatus than the poorest of children from the poorest of homes. Such things should not be. There may be many reasons why they are, but the best of reasons should not blind people to the essential evil in this state of affairs.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE ORGANIZATION OF WORK

#### I. CLASS TEACHING

**I**N this chapter it is proposed to deal with the organization of work within the class-room—the organization that falls to the lot of the class teacher. The planning of the curriculum, the making of syllabuses, the arrangements for specialists' work, and the interchange of lessons, these problems and the actual time-table should be the joint work of the head teacher and the staff, and therefore are considered in the third part of this book, dealing with problems of school life.

As we have already discussed the actual preparation of a lesson and the giving thereof in previous chapters, it now remains to try to discover some general principle that will help the beginner to decide how far he will adhere to the practice of the older school of teachers who rely mainly on the class lesson as their means of teaching, how far to that of the new teacher, who almost scorns class teaching and sees salvation in individual work. Between these two schools the believers in group work or sectional teaching seem timid half-way-house folk.

In truth, of course, all three methods have their place in class-room work, and however ardent a believer in class teaching is, he constantly has recourse to group and individual work; and he who has such a belief in individual work that he scorns class teaching, at times merely gives himself extra work.

Let us try first to get some light on the question of class teaching. If the reader had unlimited freedom and un-

limited money, would he have all children educated in units no larger than a family, or would he have schools? If he would continue a system by which the children left their homes and worked with other children of their own age or attainments for at least some hours of the majority of days in a year, would he then have very small schools where each child could become the special study of some adult, or would he have larger schools in which children of a given age worked more or less as a group?

What should be the size of the school, what of the group? Is the little school of 30 found in so many villages too small, and if so, why? Is the large school of 400 or 500 too large?

Probably the answer to these questions to a large extent will be conditioned by the type of education of the reader, for however many faults a man may find with his own educators and education he has, as a rule, a curious belief that it should be the kind that others experience. Thus one finds the majority of men who went through a public school are violent upholders of the system, though in moments of confidence they criticize it scathingly; a man who has worked through the large classes of a large day school upholds large classes and large schools. So far fewer—obviously—have had experience of the small school where the pupils really have individual attention that their voices are scarcely to be heard in a general discussion.

Schools, schoolmasters and scholars vary so greatly that it is doubtful if there is an optimum number for a class or school, but if the school is to give a training in community life, it obviously must be much larger than the community of brothers, sisters, cousins and friends that the average child knows. Again, if a child is to be more than a mere unit of a school, at least that group with which he works most frequently—that is his class—must be small enough for the teacher who is responsible for it—the class teacher—to know the children separately. Probably this limits the size of a class to about twenty and, if the head master is to know his school, the size of the school to 200! Yet at once the air is full of protests from teachers of far larger classes and head masters who boast of their schools of 600 children.



It may be that schools of as many as a thousand children are workable, but the head master is obviously bound to be an organizer and the larger the school with its crowd of teachers, the more important it is that there is one room in which a boy feels thoroughly at home, and knows its inmates intimately. It is equally important the teacher should know each individual in that group, and it seems very doubtful if most men and women can really know more than twenty. Moreover, the younger the children the more sorely they need individual attention or they get bad habits of work, waste time because they have not enough experience to finish some task of their own, while they are waiting for help, and lose that interest in learning which is frequently a characteristic of the little boy or girl, and woefully wanting in the middle school scholar.

Yet in most schools the junior classes seem to be very large and the senior comparatively select !

This discussion on the size of a school and the size of a class may seem a far cry from the work of a class teacher who, as a rule, must take the class that is given him, and only out of school hours can he urge the necessity for smaller classes and better buildings. But it introduces this chapter on classroom practice because every teacher must try to find out the best number of children for him for each type of lesson that he gives and must, as far as possible, organize his work according to his own methods of teaching. As in a country that is not at the crest of commercial prosperity the tendency is to make a teacher responsible for too many rather than too few children, it is unlikely for the next twenty years or so that most teachers will find that the classes in which they work are so small that they feel they must agitate for greater numbers.

Let us leave the unduly small school to be considered later and first assume that the average teacher in the large elementary or secondary school has a class at any rate somewhat larger than that which he considers his optimum number. Are there any lessons that he can and will want to give to the whole class ? Class teaching dies hard and we are still at the stage when most teachers, themselves taught in this way,

tend to rely unduly on it. As a rule it is the teachers of little children who have broken from the tradition of class teaching, and hence they appear once more as prophets of a reform that is already deeply affecting teaching in the upper schools. Perhaps it is still wise to remind teachers of older children that learning to think is an individual process and any lesson in which each individual must be quite sure of one step before he goes on to the next, will in most cases need individual teaching. On the other hand, there are certain experiences that are greatly intensified by being shared, and in such cases the class lesson is obviously the medium.

There is fortunately no hard and fast line between subjects that enables a teacher to say: Music is for class teaching; Mathematics for individual work; but as a general rule the lessons in which the aim of the teacher is to heighten appreciation or intellectual curiosity and alertness, can nearly always be given to the class. Children in the middle and upper school are very sensitive to their crowd and the class lesson is an appeal to the crowd feeling. The keenest children, in the well-given lesson, become the crowd leaders and the less keen and able follow. Not every child, for example, sings equally well, but all enjoy singing with the class and will learn far more because of this enjoyment and consequent willing effort than they would if singing separately. Hence a great deal of music teaching is given to the class or even a number of classes, but no good teacher of music would think he had done his duty unless all the normal boys would, simply and naturally, sing alone if called upon.

On first consideration it seems curious that the unaffected soloist should be a product of good class teaching. But it must be remembered that all are enjoying together an experience, and that for the time being the soloist is just that part of the class that has to sing a certain phrase.

Most æsthetic subjects lend themselves to class teaching. Thus a play, a poem, a good story gain, to the normal child, by being shared and it is probable that the average teacher finds it easier to read dramatically in a fairly large room to thirty children than in a small room to three. All actors and

musicians seem to do their best work in the presence of a large and sympathetic audience.

Again, on the occasions when direct moral teaching must be given, a good proportion of the lessons are best given as to the class. The class will have its pride hurt, but the individual will be protected; those least prone to the fault discussed can give a standard, and those who find the breaking of the bad habit and the acquisition of the new more difficult, will have help from the section of the community that is for reform. For most adults and for nearly all children it is easier to be at one with the crowd than against it. Perhaps not a very high value is attachable to such crowd morality, but if it enables a child to break a bad habit or acquire a new attitude it certainly cannot be despised.

Again, a very important part of a teacher's function is to arouse and keep alive curiosity in intellectual problems and desire to acquire new skill. Very often the class lesson is invaluable in such cases, for here is a problem that it will take the united efforts of the pupils to solve. Every one can recall delightful lessons of this type—the investigation of the causes that led to the Civil War, the discovery of the way in which a foreign people's modes of life differ from ours, the solution of a difficult mathematical problem, the attempt to find out how to weave or make some necessary piece of apparatus.

In all such lessons there is a great stimulus given by the interest and the suggestions of the various members of the class. The keen child struggles with the more difficult parts of the subject, where the less good, if working alone, would give it up. The love of competition is often a spur to action and further effort, but, above all, undoubtedly the strongest stimulus is this innate love of standing well with one's crowd.

But even the most successful class lesson has its limitations and the man who thinks that he teaches so well that every member of the class attends throughout the lesson and understands each step of the process, is simply labouring under a delusion. The most inexperienced of readers can test this fact for himself. He can probably recall mathematics lessons in which the class apparently discovered the solution, occa-

sionally egged on or helped by the teacher. Nevertheless, how much steady plodding had to be done at home before he really saw how to work the new rule that seemed so easy in class! The fact is that it was the class, as a class, that saw the solution—one boy saw a certain step and said 'Yes' to it, the teacher suggested given A and B that C followed, another saw the application of some piece of work done in the last lesson. And all the while there was the pleasant feeling really good work was being done. Only the old hands knew how much they would have to do at home.

'Do you see?' a certain very brilliant mathematician used to say to his class.

'Yes,' said the class; and they did see as he demonstrated.

'Then work it out to-night,' he said, as he immediately cleaned the board.

Those boys, keen on Mathematics and eager to pass an examination, met as soon as they possibly could and combined forces to work over again the class lesson. It sometimes took the best of them hours. Was this or was this not good class teaching? This question must be answered by each man according to his predilections, but perhaps it will help if certain suggestions are now given as to what the class lesson can and what it cannot do.

1. The class lesson can clearly rouse enthusiasm and so act as a spur to that individual effort which is necessary in all forms of intellectual work. It can, for example, make a pupil want to read Latin or understand graphs and, as the effort the ordinary human being puts into his work is commensurate with his desire to accomplish it, this sort of lesson is of enormous value.

2. The good teacher does undoubtedly arouse the crowd loyalty of his class, and the admirable lesson is learnt of the commonalty of knowledge and skill. Every one should do his best to help in the solution of the problem and the reward lies in the success of the work. It is only good class teachers who achieve this attitude and no one is good all the time. The lesson in which one boy does the work and the others let him do it, when the brilliant boy shows off and the timid child

almost prays that he may remain unnoticed, are failures, as far as class teaching is concerned. If the work is not really the active effort of a body of people united for a common object, it is not class work.

3. In some cases class teaching can save time ; for example, if all the members of a class have reached a point where some piece of knowledge or technique is necessary for further progress, it is obviously better to show the whole class at once than to show each member separately. A new rule in Arithmetic, a new method in handwork may be examples of this type of lesson. In most cases it should take the form of the class stating their need and the teacher, by wise use of their past experience, helping them to see what they know or what skill they possess that will be useful. Then in all probability a period of trial and error will follow and finally the demonstration by the teacher.

Very often in such lessons the teacher's part is to say : ' What do you know ? ' ' What have you to find out ? ' ' What use can you make of the work you did yesterday ? ' Thus all the applications of a piece of knowledge or skill are made.

4. It can clearly rouse appreciation of work well done whether it be of a play, a poem, a sonata or a solution of a problem. And it is most effective in making such appreciation active—that is, in encouraging the class to try to make further efforts. As a result the class lesson is most valuable in developing interests, for the fact that some members genuinely find birds, butterflies or music interesting, spurs the curiosity of others. Most of us have caught a good many of our interests from our family or our school.

5. Finally, of course, it can do all that good talk can do—arouse interest, give appreciation of other people's points of view, train a man to take intellectual defeat like a man and victory in his stride. There is nothing like good talk for helping a man to realize that other people find their attitude as incontrovertibly right as he finds his, and that however sure he is that he can convert an attentive audience, they are equally sure on the same point.

What it cannot do :

1. First and foremost it cannot take the place of individual effort.

A child may seemingly know one of the class songs, but ask him to sing it by himself and he fails ignominiously. The class may appear extremely skilful in solving some problem in geography, but get written individual work from each member and the teacher's eyes are opened to the failure of his demonstration.

2. It cannot in any real sense accomplish work that depends for its success on the expression of a pupil's individuality. Thus choral singing, choral speech are class methods, but if a teacher wants to know what a given dialogue or poem or song means to an individual he must see to it that there is no class interpretation for the boy to assimilate. Now the class interpretation is, as often as not, an imitation of the teacher's interpretation, for children follow their leader down all sorts of æsthetic paths that would otherwise be closed to them. And this is one of the worst snares of such teaching, since it encourages a child to be receptive and imitative to the detriment of his own very flickering personal like or dislike for certain types of experience. There is something wrong when all the members of a class say the same poem in the same way, act the same scene almost identically, make similar patterns for the cover of their books. And on investigation it will often be found that the teacher read the poem or helped with the scene, suggesting his interpretation; or that he put up specimens of suitable patterns in design though he gave lip-service to the value of originality by saying: 'Of course I want you to make your own patterns.'

The *reductio ad absurdum* of this lesson is when a teacher takes the trouble to give each child a flower to draw and then puts on the board a large drawing of the same specimen and says it is not to be copied. Obviously the idea underlying this plan is to help the children to see more in their own flowers. In nine cases out of ten it ends in their looking less and seeing less.

There is, undoubtedly, a place for showing amateurs better work than they themselves can do; the beautiful picture, the perfectly adapted design, the well-sung song, the excellently

read poem or story, all play a part in giving standards. Surely a girl should remember the exquisite pattern round the neck of Judith's dress in Botticelli's 'Judith and Holofernes'; she should study it and be helped by the more skilled amateur to see wherein lies its perfection. That is quite another story from showing patterns of collars and then giving the children the same sort of material, the same method of decoration and expecting them to make an original design.

Teachers delude themselves on this matter—especially the successful class teacher. Visitors are shown compositions far above the standard of that of the average child; there is dash and vigour and a use of words that is surprising. But all the class seems to have a somewhat similar turn of thought and expression. In such a case it is true that each boy has written his own story, but it is also true that the great majority have been sedulous apes of the teacher's work in story-writing. There is, of course, great value in encouraging people to be sedulous apes of those in any way better than themselves. But it should be recognized as imitative work and not called original.

3. Perhaps from the above discussion the reader has concluded that as thought is an individual process, the class lesson should not be given when it is essential that each scholar must understand each section of the exposition. Thus in all Mathematics teaching it is essential that the lesson is followed step by step; yet there is a great deal of class teaching in Mathematics. But both teacher and children rely on individual work so greatly that it is doubtful if the value of the class lesson is not illusory. The quick mathematical people waste an enormous amount of time and may even get into careless ways, the slow know they won't follow and often give up in despair. In better schools it is not uncommon for people to have private coaching in Mathematics; in schools to which poorer children go the teacher becomes in all available hours a private coach. Why not far more often than now, substitute the private for the class lesson? The answer will be 'the size of the class'. But the reader, before he gets into the thick of the fray, must try to think for himself what is the value of giving a class lesson to some people who either

could do the work unaided or to others who cannot follow his demonstration.

## 2. SECTIONAL OR GROUP WORK

If then class lessons are to go except as inspirational lessons, or to arouse further appreciation and effort, there must, while classes are so large, be some substitute, and, in the writer's opinion, this substitute is group or sectional work. Given a satisfactory classification in any ordinary class of forty boys, a fair-sized group will at the same time want help with a new rule or a new piece of technique. Now it is important that help should be forthcoming at the time it is desired. Anyone who was even slightly above the rest of his class in a subject can remember how boring it was to wait until the slower people were ready to go on to new work ; how little effort he put into practising a rule he knew or doing other revision work that he saw was only given him to keep him quiet. But if he had known that as soon as he had mastered one part of his subject he would go on to new work ; that if his master gave him revision it was because he had not yet succeeded in reaching the necessary standard of achievement, how much more zealously he would have worked. And this is what can and does happen in well-organized group work. The good teacher assumes that potentially he may have people with as many rates of working as he has boys ; but the better the school classification, the fewer will be the rates of working and standards of achievement in his class, though it is quite possible in a good class to have four groups for mathematics, four for French prose, and at least five for speech training, be it French or English. Nor must it be assumed that it is derogatory to be in one of the groups that knows less or works more slowly. It is so obvious that children are open to receive suggestions from their teacher, willing to assume what he says is right, that it seems justifiable for a teacher to use this real power to convert his class to the attitude that every one should do his best, and that it is a matter of native endowment if one is quicker at Arithmetic, another better at handwork, a third more ready of speech. In other words, that as a class may be classified in Physical Work by height,



so in Arithmetic it is convenient to re-classify according to previous knowledge and speed in seeing through a new problem, in speech training according to the quickness of ear and agility of tongue and throat muscles in reproducing what the ear hears. Hence a boy may find himself working in many groups during a day. But he will in this way be working, and not, as a small boy said who was quick at Arithmetic, 'Seeing other people work sums.' And as he will not learn a new process until he is ready to understand it and master it at his own rate, he will have more chances of avoiding those muddled thoughts that work such dire havoc.

It is sometimes assumed that group work is essential in Mathematics, and perhaps language teaching, but that Geography, Nature Study, History, Drawing, Needlework are pre-eminently class subjects. Why? If a child has not made definite studies of the life of peoples in all types of natural region, he is no more ready for the division of the world into natural regions than is the boy for approximations who has not done multiplication of decimals. If a boy has given careful study to the Stuart Period it is as dull for him to go over it again as to go over the rules for the use of the Subjunctive in Latin.

The fact is that these results of boredom and muddle are not as easily analysed in some subjects as others and that then class teaching still holds when group teaching would be better. Or, alas! that some subjects are considered more important than others. This belief is depressing and dangerous. It has been said that even the best teachers of younger children can only see that children waste their time wisely—a cynical confession of the unsuitability of 'adult' subject-matter for the very young. This statement contains a gross exaggeration of the truth that the actual knowledge of History, Geography, Literature that can be given to children under fourteen is slight. What is important is that children should leave the primary or preparatory school with the right attitude towards learning, and with good ways of working. For example, they should be interested in most of their work, and thus want to work; they should have some

power of concentration and it should not be easy to just sit while other people do or think.

Such an attitude of personal responsibility is in many cases only acquired if it is possible to work with one's equals and at one's own rate.

### 3. DIRECTED INDIVIDUAL WORK

The discussion on group work has probably led the reader, no matter how large the classes in which he was educated, to realize some of the difficulties and pitfalls in class teaching.

A school of educational reformers, who brooded on such and similar pitfalls, came to the conclusion that class teaching was but a snare enabling the brighter children to produce results sufficiently satisfactory to camouflage the muddled work and bad habits of the less able children. To them the one obvious solution of the difficulty was the abolition of class teaching and the introduction of individual work, as thus only could a teacher ensure that each child worked at his own rate and mastered difficulties as he met them.

There is food for thought in the fact that when Bell introduced the first form of 'mass' teaching educationists all hailed him as a great discoverer, and that when Dr. Montessori and Miss Parkhurst systematized Individual Work and urged the futility of class teaching, they again were hailed as reformers. To a great extent the reasons lie in the history of educational thought and cannot be discussed here. But as in all probability the reader will find himself in a school where both methods are practised it is important that he should realize their respective merits. And, indeed, if he finds himself in a school where all teaching is class teaching, or all work is individual work, it is equally important that he should be alive to the limitations and advantages of the system.<sup>1</sup> 'Much may be said on both sides', as Sir Roger always said, but it is essential that a teacher has sufficient experience of both methods to enable him to use the right

<sup>1</sup> In most schools where individual work is encouraged, some modification of the Dalton or Howard plan for Individual Work is generally adopted for the older children.

one in the right place. It is hoped the following notes will help towards such an understanding.

(a) If individual work implied one teacher, one child it would be unnecessary for the teacher to prepare carefully each step in the work.<sup>1</sup> As in a school a teacher may have as many as forty children working at their own rate and at their own stage, it is fundamental that some plan shall be made by which he can tell exactly the stage at which each pupil has arrived and the progress he has made.

Various teachers have various methods. For young children the work should be so graded that the test of a child's having successfully accomplished Grade I in Arithmetic or Reading is that he can work on the cards in Grade II. But in the senior schools such grading is neither easy nor desirable.

One of the most important sides of the training given by this method of work is that the pupils teach themselves how to work, and too careful a grading tends to defeat this process.

But, as many adolescent students know, to learn how to arrange one's work, how to test oneself is an extremely difficult art, and to say to a child of the middle school, 'Study the geography of Norway or the social life of the Elizabethans', is to talk nonsense. Hence teachers have to give such clear and simple instructions that the average child ensures average success by following them.

Here, for example, is a copy of a hectographed set of instructions given to a class of children aged about twelve who were doing individual work in Geography.

#### INDEPENDENT WORK ON NORWAY

We are to make a class book on Norway and the best work will be chosen for each chapter. Bring all the pictures you can.

*Maps.*—You can copy these from your notebooks.

- (a) Height of land with the rivers.
- (b) Rainfall and temperature.
- (c) Vegetation.

<sup>1</sup> If any readers of this book have to read Rousseau's *Emile*, they will find it throws an extraordinarily bright light on the modern controversy on Individual Work.

You may enter the chief towns on either or all of these.

Seek for information under these headings :

*Position*.—Describe this from your atlas map of Europe,

p. 7.

*Size*.—Collins, Europe, p. 172. Use squared paper to show the size compared with England.

*Coast*.—Describe it from Atlas, p. 7. Read Collins, p. 172. Then make a sketch of the head of a fiord. What is a fiord ? Use a dictionary. How were fiords formed ? Collins, p. 173. Look at the pictures in *Countries of the World*, pp. 300, 305, 306, 309. Which do you like best ? Why ?

*Relief*.—Collins, p. 171. Write a description of the surface of the country. Make a sketch of the flat-topped heights.

Look at *Countries of the World*, pp. 3009 to 3013, and *Colour Book of Lands and Peoples*, p. 1589. Which of these pictures do you like best ? Why ?

*Rivers*.—(a) Make a list of the Rivers of Norway. Collins, p. 171.

(b) Why are they short and rapid ?

(c) Waterfalls are striking features in Norway, how have they been used recently ? See Unstead, *Europe of To-day*, p. 46, par. 2 ; *Countries of the World*, pp. 3010 and 3023, and the reading on p. 3022.

(d) Copy the sketch of the Waterfall and Power Station from *The Common World of Common Folk*, by E. G. R. Taylor, p. 86.

*Climate*.—(a) Read Collins, p. 174. Write a short account of wind, temperature and rainfall.

(b) Copy the rainfall map from my *Vidal Lablache*, p. 104.

(c) Put in isotherm 30° for January in blue and isotherm 60° for July in red.

(d) Is there anything interesting about the winter weather shown in any of your pictures ? If so, tell about it.

*The People*.—(a) Collins, p. 174. How are the Norwegians described ?

(b) Look at the pictures in the Children's *Colour Book of Lands and Peoples*, pp. 1590, 1602, 1603. Describe the dress in each of these pictures, then make a coloured sketch of the one you like best.

(c) Find the names of two great Norwegian Explorers. Look in the Encyclopædia and in my *Geography Scrap Book* under A and N.

(d) Write a long account of the work that the fathers might do—there will be many kinds. Remember the sailors, the fishermen and the farmers. See who makes the most complete account.

Read Collins, pp. 175, 176, 177, 173. Unstead, *Europe of To-day*, p. 45. *Countries of the World*, pp. 3001, 3022. •

Towns.—Collect pictures of Oslo, Bergen, Trondhjem, Hammerfest.

What is there interesting about each of these towns? Collins, pp. 179-181. *Countries of the World*, pp. 3018, 3002, 3025. *Lands and Peoples*, p. 1588.

You will probably find many interesting things not mentioned here. You may add them to your work, where you think best.

(b) Granted then that a child on Monday morning can turn up his instructions in various subjects and find out with ease about how much work he should accomplish during the week, it does not at all follow that his standards of accomplishment are those of his teacher.

Hence as well as instructions as to what to do, where to find helpful information, which chapters of his books he must use, etc., there must be some test of his work. In many cases the test is the work itself, e.g. the essay on or the problem he has to solve in Arithmetic. But if the work cannot be made self-testing, then the teacher must either satisfy himself by questioning orally or by weekly, fortnightly, or monthly tests. This seems essential. It is undoubtedly true that the best class teaching may leave the least able children with the most scrappy and often inaccurate ideas, but it is equally obvious that if a boy is set the task of studying the economic life of Norway in relation to the physical characteristics and he is careless, stupid or slack during any part of his work, he can make for himself as many muddles, lay up for his back as many rods as the worst class teacher could for him.

This testing of individual children is a difficult matter. In dealing with a large class a teacher generally works out some

scheme of work (often called an Assignment) which has as an integral part some form of test. These tests, even though to a real extent they are self-corrective, must be carefully overlooked by the teacher ; otherwise a child may get into careless methods of working, writing or expression.

(c) The reader probably already has realized that individual methods add rather than detract from the work of a teacher. But once the children are trained to doing a great part of the work for themselves and the teacher has acquired experience in organizing their work and his own, the increase is more apparent than real. He must acquire the happy art of concentrating quickly on a child's problem and turning rapidly to another ; of, in fact, becoming a private coach just as if he were a master of a sixth form working for scholarships. But he can save himself an enormous amount of time by teaching a whole group or a whole class whenever it is possible. This is heresy for the out-and-out believer in individual work who would not even make attendance at one class lesson a week or at a tutorial compulsory ; but to those teachers who do not feel so strongly on the value of class teaching or individual methods that it is contrary to their principles to use both methods, the class or group lesson can be an invaluable saving of time and energy.

If forty boys paragraph badly, cannot read isotherms, paint with too dry colours ; if ten boys confuse Amount and Principal, if eight need tongue-twisters for the *ng* sound, it is mere common sense to take these forty, ten or eight together—at any rate in the first instance.

(d) Perhaps it is allowable to say to young teachers, necessarily full of enthusiasm for novelty and change, that on introducing individual work into a school in which class teaching is the most usual method, it is wise (1) to go slowly, (2) to assume the best that can be got from class teaching. Thus, for example, no scholar, even from the school where a Dalton or Howard scheme would be ridiculed, reached the school-leaving standard without an enormous amount of individual work and some private coaching. The individual work was called home-work, the private coaching was less valuable than it should be because sometimes the teacher

implied that it was the pupils' stupidity or carelessness that made it necessary; and sometimes it had to be crowded into those periods which should have been recreative for teacher and pupil alike.

There are serious disadvantages in this convention that relegates individual work to the evenings, when a child should have free time for music, hobbies, reading and play, and that permits such desultory methods of private tuition. But a scheme of class teaching interspersed with individual teaching and learning, with reasonable tests, makes an excellent diet for the average gregarious normal boy. Use the class lesson for purposes when it is excellent, use the group lesson to save time, and encourage every child to want to do and to do all he possibly can for himself, and for once get the best out of three possible worlds.

#### 4. LEARNING BY DOING

Once the reader has decided on the place and value of the respective merits of class and group teaching and individual work and had some opportunity of testing his own conclusions, he will deal more easily with the organization entailed when pupils are to take a greater share in their own education and are to be encouraged to work at solving for themselves problems of special interest—often in textbooks and lectures called 'centres of interest'.

This method of enabling children to get the full educational advantage of their love of activity and their desire to satisfy their curiosity is strongly advocated by the writers of The Primary School Report.<sup>1</sup> The report is concerned with the best methods of educating children between the ages of seven and eleven, but so many of the findings are equally applicable to the education of pupils of all ages, including many in universities and training colleges, that it is worth while for all types of teacher to consider the conclusions. The writers argue that children between the ages of seven and eleven are little workmen looking for jobs they can do and that, given the opportunity of completing such jobs as arouse their

<sup>1</sup> The Primary School Report (or Hadow Report), H.M. Stationery Office.

interest, they find the need of most of the formal skills necessary for the citizen of a civilized society. They find, for example, the need of at least the elements of the three R's, of the value of some forms of reference books, and equally of help from the better-informed adult, be he a teacher, a librarian or an engine driver. The class lesson becomes a period when the children can get the help they require; the group, the help on their special problem. Thus a class working at the production of an historical play or pageant, a series of lectures on their own topics of interest, dinner-hour concerts or what they will, can often receive such instruction as they need most easily from their teacher in the form of a class lesson. But if, for example, a small group has made itself responsible for the production of the necessary posters announcing the play, concert or pageant, it would obviously be a waste of time to give the whole class lessons on lettering that would be of utmost interest to this group. Individual work, too, takes on a different aspect, for it is one thing to work through such an assignment as is quoted on page 79, quite another to be responsible for finding out the correct dresses for those representing the journey of Queen Elizabeth to visit her fleet at Deptford.

A class so organized that such work is possible makes the best of the pupils' zeal to be up and doing, and undoubtedly gives to the child who is not a lover of books, a very normal person, a motive for learning that is absent from the formal school.

This method of learning by doing, and learning further in order to do more things and to do them better, is as old as man, if not as old as the hills. Hence here we have the main reason for the fact that the teacher who can adapt his formal teaching so as to supply the needs of his class, no matter what their age or interests, will have them actively co-operating with him as co-workers.

Thus if children want to paper a doll's house, make furniture, produce a play, build a city, or run an imaginary island, even the less skilful teacher can make the hours spent on the work full of educational value.

Again, if a boy really wants to learn to write, read, acquire facility in some arithmetical process, or pass some qualifying



examination, he has as great a need and urge to solve that problem as any that could be devised by the teacher ; indeed, if a new method or scheme of work be imposed on a class that seems to cut across their own plan, passing matriculation, for example, they will bitterly resent it and declare it to be waste of time.

It is always difficult for the advocates of a new method to be fair to the old they wish to displace, but the writers of The Primary School Report would be the last to assert that school work is so dull and uninteresting that the pupils must be bribed to partake of it. If this were true it would be necessary to alter the curriculum as well as the methods of teaching and organizing work ; for no methods of teaching will be satisfactory if the curriculum is unsuitable. However, the problems connected with the curriculum must be left for a later chapter. Here it only remains to state that so keen are certain reformers of education on children of all ages learning in natural ways through doing real jobs that, especially in America, children in school are put into ' life situations ' where they find themselves faced with such problems as whitewashing a barn, running a small farm, tending animals, etc.

But just as there is something artificial in assuming that a child living in the world of to-day must necessarily be interested in primitive forms of weaving because she wants to make and use a small loom, so it seems fallacious to assume that a child of commercial parents in a commercial environment must necessarily find his interest in practical pursuits and be educated along those lines. Surely the life of his own community will suggest to him the problems he must solve if he wishes to be a man like his father, a scholar like his teacher or an airman like his favourite hero. In most cases the necessity of writing the standard English or American, the acquisition of at least a legible handwriting and readable style and a modicum of mathematical skill are brought home to him.

The fundamental truth brought to light by such heuristic methods is that if teachers want wholehearted co-operation of their classes they must be able to justify the curriculum at any rate to such an extent that the class sees some reason for working. Then the problem to acquire tables, a legible form

of handwriting, a working knowledge of a foreign language is for the learner genuine and he will work in order to accomplish the end. In a civilized community, as in a primitive, knowledge should be a means to an end and it seems a curious aping of less bookish times to invent problems and projects to make learning appear important. The problem of learning how to do was real and imperative alike to the primitive people, and to those of a civilization based on handicrafts. Surely the problems of the present century are equally important—to acquire the use of the tools with which one makes civilized thought, to understand something of the world and its peoples that new means of communication have brought so close to one's door, to share in some tiny way in the great gifts that artists of all centuries have left and to shoulder the responsibility of this goodly heritage.

Nevertheless, it cannot be urged too strongly that teachers should take every opportunity of encouraging children to work out their own projects, and teachers, even now, seem curiously blind to the educational value of what children look on as their 'real work'. Thus four small boys who watched some electricians wiring a street began in their play-time to be 'electrics' and wired their sand pile. They ate their lunch seated as did the real 'electrics' and called each other by the names of their heroes. Here was a project to hand that could have grown as did the life of the 'little men' that is described in the Story of a Sand Pile.

Again, another boy decided to make a series of wells and fountains in his garden and he worked for all the hours of daylight until he did so.

A child who disliked school because it interfered with her work had a family consisting of a man and his wife and children who lived in Happy Town. The town had many needs to be supplied—a church, shops, cars, newspapers, schools, houses, clubs, inhabitants ranging from the clergyman to the flower-seller. All demanded much initiative, adaptation of means to ends, patience and very good manual craft of various kinds. Yet at school the child hated handwork.

Most readers can think of real projects in their own child-

hood that demanded thought and concentrated effort. It is such work that is vital and it seems as if only unintelligent, stereotyped educators would be blind to the immense possibilities therein.

### 5. A SUMMARY OF CONCLUSION

The following quotation from The Primary School Report throws a new light on the methods of organizing teaching that we have discussed in this chapter. No better statement of the relation of these various types of teaching and learning can, to my mind, be found than in the following summary statement :

‘ There are three main ways by which a child, and indeed any human being, learns : through suggestion by a teacher, through demonstration or exposition whether by a teacher or by a book, by actual experimentation on his own part. By suggestion the teacher unfolds to the child fresh fields of activity and knowledge, and persuades him to give himself wholeheartedly to their mastery, not as a mere matter of meaningless routine, but because he understands already something of their purpose, their utility and their practical use to himself. A child will apply himself to the mastery of reading all the more willingly when he realizes that this mastery is the key that unlocks the secrets of the printed page and gives him the power to possess them at will ; and arithmetic and geometry will no longer be for him an arid discipline when these subjects are justified in his eyes by the power they give him in dealing with practical situations. By demonstration and exposition the teacher guides and assists the child in his acquisition of knowledge and skill. By experimentation the child acquires knowledge through personal experience and exercises his growing powers of hand and mind. . . . We do not propose to examine or appraise the various methods of individual or group work which have been tried or advocated and we limit ourselves to the following observations :

‘ 1. Since the immediate aim of teaching is that the pupil shall become an active learner, any method which is claimed, on reasonable grounds, to conduce to that end is worthy of unbiassed study.

'2. The well-tried methods of corporate teaching have an indispensable place in the school economy, and should not be discarded wholesale in obedience to insufficiently tested theories.

'3. Nevertheless, there are occasions and purposes for which they are not so suitable as methods which, while not depriving the pupil of the stimulus, inspiration and guidance of the teacher, yet leave him reasonable scope to pursue his own interests, to learn in his own way, and to acquire the priceless habit of independent purposeful work.'

And later in the same chapter the Report continues: 'The teacher must guide and direct, but the child's activities and experiments must be real.'<sup>1</sup>

But here we must leave the discussion of classroom organization and methods and turn to the problems of the school, and among them to a further consideration of the school curriculum.

<sup>1</sup> The Primary School Report, pp. 152-3.

## PART III

# PROBLEMS OF THE SCHOOL

### CHAPTER VIII

## THE RELATION OF THE SCHOOL TO THE COMMUNITY

### I. CLASSIFICATION OF SCHOOL

**W**ITH the Education Act of 1902 secondary education for all has been made compulsory and also, with few exceptions, the common school for children under eleven has been put in the place of the two departments of the elementary school that were known, and will be for years to come, as the infant and junior school.

The classification adopted by the Ministry of Education is as follows :

The Nursery School for children of two to five.

The Primary School for children from five to eleven.

The Modern Secondary or Technical School for children who will leave school at sixteen.

The Grammar School for children who will go on to a university, and will not leave school till they are eighteen.

To a great extent what type of school a child attends will depend on what he does before he is eleven, an aspect of the new act that many strongly dislike. But there will be opportunity for re-consideration of his future education at the age of thirteen, when he may be removed from his modern secondary school to some type of trade school, technical school, college of art or to the grammar school.

Thus it is assumed that for children under eleven one type of school will be sufficient, as the needs of children of this age are pretty much the same whether they are going to be

schoolmasters or dustmen. It is, as a rule, after the junior school age that children's interests and abilities make it necessary to provide different types of school.

There are, of course, also schools for children with special disabilities, such as blindness, deafness, etc.

Only the schools for the great majority of children—those who go from the nursery school via the primary school to the modern secondary school—can be considered here, for it is in one of such schools that most teachers begin their career.

## 2. THE FUNCTIONS OF THE SCHOOL

In a modern school there are so many parts to be played that the question of school management may be looked on from many points of view. For example, the relation of the school to the community and of the community to the school concerns the public administrator as much as the teacher. Hence it is necessary to give some consideration to various aspects of school life if one desires to think clearly about the problems that are generally connected with school management.

The management of schools from the point of view of the state is outside the purview of this book. But the relation of the school to the community has both directly and indirectly great influence on educational practice. The relation of school to community, of the head master to the staff, of him and the staff to the children, of children to children, are all of the utmost importance. These points, considered in connection with the attitude of all alike to work and the interrelation of work and games, should show the factors which must be taken into account when considering problems of discipline—a problem that can never be satisfactorily solved unless it be looked on as the method of ensuring the conditions of harmonious work.

The part played by the school in the life of a modern community might be looked upon as two-fold—to hand on traditional knowledge and skill, and to inculcate the moral standards that would enable a child on leaving school to act a worthy part in the community life. But, in addition, the child of to-day is the citizen of to-morrow, and hence a balance must be kept

between his life as a learner of accepted ideals, traditions, knowledge and skill, and that, of a creator with steadily developing initiative and self-reliance. The possibilities of a nice adjustment of these two essentials must be dealt with in the chapter on the curriculum. Here our concern is rather with the conditions the school must fulfil, if in a real sense it is to be a state organization for the training and equipment of future citizens.

It seems redundant to insist that a school shall be an organic part of that vast organization that has to deal with the immature citizen, and yet, at present, this is so far from being the case that it is important to remind every teacher of the chief conditions of this necessary connection.

1. There must be close connection between the pre-school years of a child and his school life, especially as regards his physical training and health. Thus all large schools in a poor neighbourhood need a crèche, preparatory nursery school and Infant Welfare Centre—the latter to help with advice and friendliness to mothers, the two former to take charge of children to whom, for some reason, the mother cannot attend. It would be easier if all such pre-school agencies could be administered by the same body that administers the schools, for it is continuity of care that is necessary for children. But whoever is responsible for the care of children up to five should be equally responsible for handing on to the head mistress of the infant school, to which the child is admitted, a detailed health card. Any practical administrator will agree that all these cards or records should be similar in form, in order that they can be easily kept and easily transferred from one educational institution to another.

When a child leaves the primary school at eleven, or later the secondary, the last school which he has attended should have, *inter alia*, a full record of a child's health and capacity and attainments. To the age of five it is obvious that the child's health is of paramount importance, and hence it is on the health of a child that the Welfare Centre, crèche and nursery school should report.

2. By the Health of the School Child Act of 1908 Local Education Authorities are compelled to make arrangements

for children to be medically examined on admission to the infant schools. But in the first place such examination often is a year or more too late or, through lack of information as to the child's past history, inaccurate: in the same way when the child goes from the infant to the primary school and thence via a modern secondary school to a Labour Exchange, there should go with him his health record. No division of work between a Ministry of Health, Board of Education and L.E.A.'s should be allowed to prevent this continuity of medical history.

Before leaving this side of the problem a word must be said of the equally vital interconnection between the school and the 'health school'—be it private doctor, clinic or hospital; not only should attendance at such an institution be made compulsory, but also the treatment recommended by the doctor should be carried out. For the State to pay for at least three medical examinations for every child between the ages of six and fourteen and not to insist on treatment is to waste time and labour.

In the modern school 'school management' implies this care, but many authorities are extremely insensitive to the need of preventive and remedial health work. The head teacher is bound to organize his work so that the children's health is his first consideration; the people who undertake the work of teaching in a primary school must prepare themselves to act as loyal assistants to doctors and nurses; equally the health authority<sup>1</sup> must by means of doctors, nurses, local clinics, arrangements with the major hospitals, a staff of health inspectors, at least as important as attendance officers, see that the necessary treatment is carried out. It was in 1870 that we instituted compulsory education. It surely implied compulsory attention to children's health, and the sooner the implication is explicit the better for the nation.<sup>2</sup>

3. Many other ways will suggest themselves in which the management of a school must be conditioned by its place in

<sup>1</sup> For children of school age the L.E.A.

<sup>2</sup> The Education Act of 1944 makes full provision for medical attention and free school meals for all pupils attending State schools.



the community; but before we leave this section of the chapter, one other point must be discussed—the relation of the Modern Secondary School to the official organization for placing a child in suitable work at the age of sixteen. To schools in large boroughs and towns there is now nearly always attached an After Care Committee, of which the head teacher is a member, whose duty it is to interview children about to leave school, to find out for what work the child is most suited, and to send the information to the Junior Advisory Committee of the local Labour Exchange. The London County Council has a Central Bureau which deals with the needs of children attending schools until they are sixteen, and in a poor district which the writer knows fairly well, many keep their children at school until sixteen because they hear from other parents of the good posts then waiting for the girls and boys.

By the Act children should stay at school until they are sixteen, but even for people of that age it will often be difficult to provide suitable work. At sixteen most boys and girls are still emotionally unstable and many have not yet found their dominant interest. Many employers do not give that training to their employees which will make them good workers, reliable, able to take responsibility and use initiative. How too one spends one's leisure time is mainly a matter of help at the right time along the lines of dominant interests. Hence the same act also makes it compulsory that all who leave school at sixteen shall, in their employer's time, attend a continuation school, probably to be known as a young people's college, for at least two sessions a week.

Such schools will play a most valuable part in the training of citizens. The teachers will act as liaison officers between the schools from which the pupils come and the works managers.

Also teachers thus have some test by which to judge the work of the last years in school and can reorganize if they find the work of the later years was not as helpful to the children as it might be.

Finally, the teachers in the continuation schools and the works managers will be mutually helpful, each being able to

throw light on the reasons for misfits, the most suitable work for the lad of special ability, and those cases that need special consideration.

At present we abuse the schools and leave them to solve unaided the extremely important question of the best education for a child of eleven who at the latest will leave school at sixteen to face new masters, new comrades, new buildings and new responsibilities. No community is doing its duty by its schools which does not take a hand in solving this problem. Teachers as a body say 'non possumus', and, ask for more time with the children. Employers as a body say the schools cannot do their work; but the good employer and the good teacher working out the problem together would find, and indeed do find, where the difficulties originated and even perhaps some remedies for them. The one official meeting place is on the Junior Advisory Committee of the local Labour Exchange and hence the necessity of using and developing this official machinery to the very greatest extent.

### 3. THE INTERRELATION OF SCHOOLS

In this section the schools under discussion are those which make the rungs in the usual educational ladder, the Nursery, Primary, and Modern Secondary Schools. To make the discussion complete there should be added the relation of the secondary schools to places of higher education, but there is obvious justification for omitting consideration of that problem in a book of this kind.

Even the problem of the interrelation of school with school has aspects that do not directly affect the work of the beginner, but if he will bear in mind that what is said about schools indirectly refers to the relation of class to class he should find the following considerations worthy of thought :

1. Every child has a past and a future, and if his education is to be real, the work in any given department, or indeed class, must be built up on the basis of his past experience. It must also take account of his present capacity and need, and no

thought of what will be demanded of him in another department should persuade a teacher to sacrifice the child of to-day to some one's idea of what that child should become in two years' time. It cannot be said too often that a child can only grow into the best possible man if at each stage of his development he has those physical and mental experiences that he needs. Starved bodies, starved minds, have such obvious effects that they need only be mentioned; but children who are given the wrong kind of food for their age, the wrong kind of education, suffer to almost as great a degree. The pity is that, as the ill-effects are more subtle, they often go unnoticed.

The application of this truth is well illustrated by the example of the interrelation of the infant school or kindergarten with the junior school. There is a tendency, utterly to be deplored, for the head teachers of junior departments to look upon the work of the little children as waste of time, unless at a given age they have acquired such rudiments of formal training as make them apparently easy to deal with when they enter their new school.

Now there is no golden age at which to acquire reading and writing. It is quite possible that one set of children could leave an infants' school at six, quite eager and willing to read easy books for themselves, while another might still need help in the recognition of very simple symbols. Even teachers can vary at the rate at which, as infant teachers say, they can 'bring children on'. Hence if the whole work of the infant department has to be formalized, if all have to work under a strain because, no matter what is their normal rate of progress, children must reach a given standard at a given time, the most important years of development will be sacrificed to the supposed needs of the future.

To the outside critic the most depressing aspect of the affair is that every organizer seems to place the blame on some one else. For example, a head master will justify the standard he expects from the entrants to his school, by stating that unless A has reached a given point at seven he cannot hope to gain a scholarship at eleven; and the head master of the secondary school may equally demand a given

standard of achievement at eleven if A is to matriculate at sixteen.

Every teacher must make a stand against this absurd sacrifice of present education to future results. To do one's best to give a child the right education at any given time ; never to falter or weary in the attempt to improve one's own knowledge of children and skill in helping them ; never to quench the burning flax of interest ; always to remember the child is the product of his past and that the present must be the bridge from the past to the future ; and then to have faith and to endure adverse criticism if need be.

Should, then, no concern be attached to the fact that the child must leave the kindergarten at a given age and qualify for a scholarship a few years later ? Of course every care should be taken to make the child's life through the various departments as unified, orderly and harmonious as possible. But such continuity is effected by constant discussion between the teachers who had, have and will have the children ; and, above all, by a cheerful willingness on the part of any teacher to build on what foundation has been given in the past and not to insist it shall be what he thinks he would have given had he been the teacher of the previous year. Even if he thinks all the teachers who had the children previously were poor and inefficient, nevertheless he is bound to continue the child's education from the point to which the child has reached. When he knows that his class is the product of the patient work of people specially trained to deal with little children, surely he should have sufficient respect for colleagues to let them decide the standard of attainment which can be reached without engendering slackness in the children or permitting undue strain.

#### 4. THE SCHOOL AS A UNIT

In this section it is proposed to consider the interaction of the groups of people who actually work in the schools—the head teacher, kept in touch with the requirements of the L.E.A. by the district inspector, the staff and the children.

Part of the duty of a head teacher is obviously to interpret to his staff the requirements of their governing body and

to keep the same body, probably through their inspector, informed on the problems, difficulties and successes of the school.

Later we must discuss the minimum that the L.E.A. can demand of the child leaving the primary school at eleven or the secondary at sixteen ; here it suffices to state that the inspector should do his best to see the children receive that fixed minimum of instruction and to let the head master know of methods that have been approved by experimenters in pedagogy, either in colleges, laboratories or other schools. Whether such methods are applicable to the conditions of his own school is a question for the head teacher and staff, and should be fully discussed by them before an experiment is made in one class.

If inspectors press for further obedience than that suggested here they press for unsound work. No method, much less a subject, can be used in a school unless it be approved by that staff under conditions which they alone appreciate. Any inspector who consciously or unconsciously allows his views on promotion to be influenced by the amenability of a school staff to his own views is really an educational danger. Initiative is as an important factor in a teacher as in a business man, and the teacher who is most obedient to an inspector is often lacking in ideas. Nevertheless, the attitude of the head master should not be that an Englishman's school is his castle and that all who enter must be made aware of it. A school that is seldom visited and of which the staff is happy and contented and unwilling to move to other schools, may become limited and self-centred, and tend to forget it is only one department of a great social organization. To such schools inspectors can be invaluable.

To discuss the relations of the head teacher to the staff is difficult, but there are general principles underlying success here, and many cases of failure can be traced to neglect of one or more of them.

1. In the first case those relations must be happy. The head who thinks he is there to knock the nonsense out of young teachers, to see that the boys are taught his way and learn in his way, may be right, but unless he can fulfil these

functions without reducing his staff to despair or making them his bitter enemies he had better forget his functions.

If children's individuality should be respected so also should a teacher's. Teachers, young ones especially, may be inefficiently wasting time; others, old ones especially, may be set, but the head master can only help if he wins their respect and desire for his help. And even then they must be helped along their own lines and not along his.

There may come moments when the most liberal-minded official must decide on a policy contrary to the wishes of his subordinates, but these cases are not frequent and a staff loyally accepts such decisions if they feel that, where possible, they are left free.

2. It follows that a staff must be a democratic body and as a corollary there must be frequent opportunities of discussions on the various sides of the work of the school. A case in point is the visit of an inspector, who sees the head teacher about the work in some classes. He suggests as a result a change in curriculum, say the introduction of a certain fashionable craft. In one school the head teacher told two members of a staff of eight that they must learn that craft and be prepared to teach it next session. Both of these teachers were very absorbed in other subjects at the time, and doing much work on them in the evenings. Both were young and too nervous to refuse. Hence the school lost two keen workers in other subjects and gained two people attending, in a very sulky, disapproving mood, classes in the other subject—a course on the appreciation of music!

A staff meeting, a free discussion as to the value of the new subject to the children, as to the possibilities of any member of the staff acquiring the necessary skill would have had an entirely different mental effect on staff and so on children. Even if a teacher had given up his special interest for a year in order to make himself more efficient in a subject needed for that school he would have done so in a different spirit.

3. No member of a staff must be overworked, and the keen young head teacher who tries to make up for all the seeming inefficiencies of an easygoing staff is asking for trouble. The

ideal plan is that every one pulls his weight ; if through age or incompetence anyone cannot do so, the extra weight must be shared, or the boat must be lightened. An overworked teacher eventually loses freshness, willingness to listen to children's talk, interest in their home life, their play and troubles. At any rate, in an elementary school, it is as necessary to be the children's confidant as their teacher. An overworked head teacher reacts unhappily on the whole school.

Again, in the relation of the staff to the children, certain general principles are observable and here those that are enunciated are for the normal good school of our own times :

1. There must be mutual respect and trust. Children by prestige-suggestion tend to think older and bigger people are wiser than they, and a teacher who does not abuse this innate tendency, will find that it is easy to base on it the beginnings of that sentiment of respect for people who do their work faithfully and magnanimously. Perhaps the underlying condition is an absence of fear on both sides. The teacher who fears a class' finding out his ignorance and incompetencies unconsciously neither respects nor trusts them and they in their turn soon realize something is wrong. Children do not easily divine fear in such people as teachers, but they put down undue severity or aloofness to pride, or anger or even to ignorance. A teacher must be a person who helps every individual in all possible ways, but who often has to say : ' This is not a thing I can help you with ' ; who sees that the class can work uninterruptedly and hence checks all individual peculiarities that are likely to prevent quiet and orderly life ; who knows how much each individual in the room can do and who keeps him to that standard, and though he does not expect the impossible, assumes the best can and should be done. Above all he must be honest, and no false ideas of his position should prevent this attitude. Any assumption of knowledge or power that cannot be justified is fatal. There is no reason why one should not confess ignorances, mistakes, misjudgments and even temper. There is every reason why a teacher should not attempt by word or attitude to imply all his mistakes were ' according to plan '.

2. In dealing with modern school problems it seems wise to suggest that another fundamental condition of good school management is that there should be mutual consideration. Some of the plans for children's amusements, entertainments, etc., seem to ignore the fact that teachers must have a free life of their own in which they can mix with their equals. It is possible that the head of a school is responsible for this state of affairs, but it is often the fault of a self-sacrificing staff. Children can be over-considered in a school, just as in a home, and it is equally bad for them. Even the youngest like to feel they are helping others, and this feeling must be utilized in order to build up in a child a sense of responsibility towards the members of his community. In most modern schools children learn to help each other, but they must also learn to help the staff. Anything that the children can do in the way of tidying rooms, giving out material, marking books, copying time-tables, counting stock, writing notices, etc., etc., should be done as a matter of course. Every teacher knows how often the experience that carries him through a bad day is the willing help of a child. Froebel was never a safer guide than when he told us to accept these offers of help and unfailingly use them.

3. Equally true is it that there must be common play. Fortunate is the reader who looks back to the joy of playing with some friendly elder. All of us who have seen a teacher really playing with children in school, be it an organized game or at dramatizing a story, have realized the delightful effect it has on class management. But the play must be play and not merely an educational game. Hence the value of staff v. children's matches in which the children can so often win, competitions, a staff play for the school in return for a school play for the staff. The more necessitous a school is the more important is it that this relation between staff and children should be apparent, for out of school they are less likely to meet adults with sufficient leisure to befriend them in such ways.

In most of the primary schools of to-day serious and successful efforts are made to help the children to realize they are members of a community and therefore have not only



certain privileges, but also certain duties. Children who, were they in secondary schools, would be looked on as juniors, are made school prefects and become responsible for a definite part of the school discipline.

The growing popularity of team games has been one of the factors that has prompted the staff to organize a school into houses, for it was soon obvious that if the keenness that was generated in team games could be utilized for work, the results would be excellent.

The House system is too well known to need any but the slightest explanation; it should, clearly, be a vertical classification for much of the value is lost if it does not by breaking up the class unit give the elder scholars an interest in, and sense of responsibility towards, the younger children. It should also, of course, be an organization for games as well as for work and any success of any member of the house must count as 'one to the house'. Thus a boy who is good at Arithmetic, shocking at history and cricket, scores for his house in the Arithmetic test, and is valued accordingly. The little children take their part in the life of the house and the elder ones have a friendly interest in helping them in their preparation for the concert, the play or sports. If all the activities of the school are thus accounted part of the corporate life there is no temptation to tyrannize over the younger ones to ensure their working at those special activities that pay.

The dangers of the system are obvious at any rate to those teachers who have used it in their schools.

In the first case, though rivalry be a natural and healthy tendency, it is fairly strong in the Anglo-Saxon people and does not need encouragement. Now keen teachers and keen heads of houses tend to over-develop rivalry and in so doing to ignore the real value of the system—the acquisition in all individuals of the practice of considering their community even at the cost of their own inclination. This consideration is at the root of all ethical social life; it is hard to acquire and woefully hard to practise.

The best one can do for children who leave school at sixteen is to give them plenty of practice in subordinating their own

desires to the desires of the community, not because there is need to defeat a rival, but because they care for their community and want to help it. If there be undue stress on the need of victory, the competitive spirit will take the place of the spirit of comradeship.

It follows that the relation of the children amongst themselves must also be friendly, democratic and helpful; but children wear their rue with a difference and though friendly teachers make friendly children, nevertheless the attitude of a boy of thirteen to a boy of seven is almost bound to have more dignity and superiority than that of teacher to child. Many a school that has an efficient prefect system has realized that the prefects are more severe and even dominating than a teacher would be; yet there are no ill effects. No more psychology than is possessed by the man in the street is necessary to explain this fact. The elder child is still feeling the need of dignity to uphold his authority—is, in reality, in the same position as a nervous young teacher who assumes aloofness as a protection—the younger child has a respect for the big boy which is, perhaps, tinged with self-approval. He can see himself in the prefect who shares with him certain strong likes, dislikes and conventions; whereas teachers belong to another community, and necessarily have different ideals, tastes and interests. It is possible that this very interesting form of hero worship could be even more used in schools than it is at present; it is certainly the basis of school tone.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE CURRICULUM

#### I. THE ESSENTIALS OF SCHOOL WORK

**I**N many ways the statement on p. 90 as to the need of initiating the child into the knowledge and customs of the day, and also developing in him initiative and self-control, should decide the curriculum of the school, which should make

suitable arrangements to perform those functions which it is paid to carry out. Hence it must see that by the time a child is nine he can speak well, write with some ease, have some skill in the manipulation of figures in the chief arithmetical processes. If anything the schools have been over-zealous in performing this part of their duty, and in the long run over-zealousness defeats its own ends. In these days, when the poorest child should be at school till he is over fifteen, there should be no excessive hurry to teach him how to add, subtract, multiply and divide. The less able he is the more necessary it is to go slowly and the more important to ensure that what he knows when he leaves school he will know for good. A slow child does not mind going over the same thing again and again; what he does mind is being scolded, 'borne with', or feeling hustled. Nor must the curriculum be so organized as to hamper a child's free growth, to place such a burden on teacher and pupils that community life is nothing but a side issue. There must be time for teacher and children to laugh together, for quick children to help the slower, for the children to be given a share in the organization of their own work and play. The results that are expected should be those possible for free, unhurried children. Education is the normal growth of a child, and the life of the school should be such that healthy natural growth can go on under the best conditions. Hence, in terms of the child, the first principle underlying the arrangement of a school curriculum is that it should supply the necessary wants of the pupils. Thus a child needs to play, at first by himself, later with his fellows, and a school must give him the opportunity. Also, he really wants to learn, partly because he is full of curiosity, partly because he is a sedulous ape and longs to be like his elders—whom he innocently believes to be full of learning—partly because man is a self-assertive animal with an urge for doing and making, and to do and make he must know. Thus it is that a good school makes arrangements for doing and learning and sees that the child is kept at doing and learning. No one is such a trial to himself, as well as to others, as a lazy child—a fact that children realize, for they nearly always prefer the unsympathetic teacher who makes

them work to the friendly person who lets them 'play about'.

It is, of course, far easier to write in general terms about school work than to draw up a satisfactory scheme of work for a given type of school. The community, through the Board of Education and the Local Education Authority, will make certain regulations which at some points are useful and at others hampering. The parents also help or hinder enormously, especially in most State schools where parents and children live a very intimate life and the parents give franker criticism on how the teacher does his work than would seem wise to most parents of public-school boys.

Perhaps it would clear the way for the more difficult aspects of the subject if the province of the community could be dealt with first.

Here the first difficulty that we encounter is that the schools should be in the line of advance in community life, and yet they are administered by members of the community, often well on in middle age, who have more thought for here and now than for the future. What then the community will demand of the school is such education for children as the middle-aged, average, fairly enlightened citizen thinks suitable. It is only in exceptional cases that one finds the governing bodies of large educational areas enthusiastic for new methods and experiments on a large scale. And rightly so; educational experiment is so costly of the most precious material the State owns that it should be very carefully made, and when possible, with 'control' cases.

In a word, what the community can and does do is to lay down the minimum of attainment in certain branches of study. It is doubtful if it can do more, and it can only do as much as that provided it can get loyal hard-working teachers who have been trained to teach those subjects. As soon as further pressure is put on teachers and they are asked to do work for which they are not fitted, a certain amount of waste of time and material is the result. Examples to prove this point can be found in the history of the teaching of any special subject in a large number of schools. Nature Study, for example, in the London schools. Keen teachers began it;

inspectors encouraged it and sent other teachers to see the work, these others often knowing nothing about coltsfoot but that it was a rock. Head teachers realized that it was a 'coming subject' and put it into their curriculum. The waste of time, the worry and fret of the staff, the boredom of the children, were pitiable. Now it is taught in schools where the teachers have a fair acquaintance with the subject, with delightful results. If it is possible to give advice to educational administrators, one of the most useful suggestions would begin in the negative—Don't have fashionable subjects or fashionable methods—followed by—Do begin reforms among young teachers, or preferably students still in Training Colleges; failing the possibility of that, in evening courses of lectures and demonstrations. But all this leaves one still asking: What, then, is the minimum that one's governors can insist on?

In this decade of the twentieth century, the first answer that comes to one's pen is—Health. No one has done more to ensure this in our own times than the Board of Education, and now the Ministry of Health; and always with the child-loving English community in full sympathy with them. Welfare Work, Medical Inspections, Special Schools, School Journeys and Holidays, the delightful syllabus issued by the Board of Education for Physical Training, all have this one object, the health of the child. In this work the teachers in primary schools have been at one with their community, and the loyal service they have given, entailing serious calls on their free time and money, can only be realized by those who are intimately in touch with the schools. Yet in 1909, when the first medical inspections were carried out in London, teacher after teacher said this was not the work of the school. Now it is teachers who are urging a less-instructed community to spend more on the children's health, to cut their losses on bad buildings and have children in healthy schools.

In the second place, the community can demand that a child shall be given the standards decent for the good citizen. No matter how good a school was in examinations, no L.E.A. would approve it were it really found to encourage lying,

cheating, and backbiting. The English way of demanding this is to demand a healthy 'tone' in a school, and the way to get it is not to put the subject in the curriculum but to encourage in all possible ways decent people with decent standards to become teachers and then to trust them, as they must in their turn trust the children. The morals of most school-children are better than the adults of their community—they are more kindly, honest, hard-working, trustful and generous. The teachers must be the kind of people who will understand this and in no way suggest to children that success is more important than the good life. Nor must those in authority judge the work done in a school by paper results, for thus the teachers tend to be warped in their view of the purpose of education.

Thirdly, the children must be kept at work steadily gaining that knowledge which is necessary to the mental development of their age—no more, and certainly no less.

In the kindergarten and the infant school they must through play 'sense' the world in which they live; they must learn the traditional songs and stories and games of childhood, they must take their share in community life; their growing interest in the world around them must be encouraged both by their own gallant attempts to imitate it and by their eager absorption of the stories that their elders can tell them. In connection with their sense training they will acquire skill over certain materials, for this is part of knowing one's universe; they will build, they will use clay, they will colour. And each new skill that is acquired should add to their power of self-expression. As the children reach the age of six or seven, out of their games must come the rudiments of formal training; they will keep shops and learn to weigh and to measure with some accuracy. Records in the form of bills may give the first impetus to writing, and more than one naturally brought up child has learnt to write before even desiring to read other people's writing.

Other children get reading first; one boy read figures long before he was proficient in even simple words, because he was interested in motor-cars; another, because he wanted to find out the lengths of big rivers which had attracted his attention

in an atlas. Many children begin by writing their own name and address. The essential is that each child should begin at his own point, and the teacher should be free enough to let this really important psychic event happen. There is much to be said for class work with older children who have the crowd instinct strongly developed, but there is neither rhyme nor reason in having large classes for little children who are to be introduced to the world of reading and writing. Ideally he should learn in the home where it is more possible to follow closely his own line of interest. If a child begins at the wrong point—too early or too late—if he is taken too fast or too slowly, the work becomes an unmeaning process to him, and his energy flags. Teachers in infant schools know this only too well, and for that reason they have been pioneers in 'individual work'. But such work is often unsatisfactory in large classes, for it demands most carefully graded apparatus and careful supervision. To give such supervision to fifty children, to keep a careful record of the progress of the individual, to test him on each stage of his journey, is such an arduous work that the teacher is overworked, spends her evening making apparatus, and consequently loses her sense of proportion as to the value of the apparatus, and may even measure the child by the apparatus work. When this happens, it would be better to get back to the greater freedom of class teaching when of the fifty children some always went into their self-protective shells when the reading or number lesson came.

As the children leave kindergarten or infant school, though the education must become more formal, it should certainly always have its origin in the child's needs to adapt himself to his environment. But here, again, the demands on the child should be such that he can see the reason for them. He must learn the tables that he built up earlier because they save him time; he must keep a book of his spelling mistakes because he must write his compositions correctly; he must make a map of his own set of streets or village because he is a big boy and must know how to find his way, or is making a guide-book, etc. A nature walk by a compass, or a treasure-trove hunt, will give a child an understanding of direction that no amount of map work in a class-room can achieve.

Briefly, what the community can demand is that by the time a child leaves the junior for the senior school he shall read and speak clearly and with a fair accent, that he shall have mastered the fundamental processes of arithmetic, that his childish interest in all around him shall have, to some measure, been canalized into an interest in some branch of art or some kind of reading other than school subjects ; most important of all, perhaps, that he shall enjoy school and not find the work irksome and should be accustomed to work hard while he is working. It is fairly safe to assert that the secondary schools would welcome this sort of healthy normal child, good at play and moderately interested in work, and would undertake to make him a successful matriculant—even with the present somewhat unpsychological syllabuses—by the time he was to leave school.

Until the Education Act of 1902 is fully implemented and there are maintenance grants and free places in good secondary schools of the right type for all who desire them, teachers and parents will still struggle to get places in the schools with the best reputation in their district, be it a modern secondary, a grammar or a technical high school. The result will be that undue pressure is put on the most promising children.

Probably in the future, various types of test will play a far greater part in deciding on the best kind of school for any boy ; the qualifying examination will then take the place of the scholarship examination which in all large cities and in many counties has become a gruelling test. But old customs die hard and new schools arise slowly. While there are not sufficient free places for all in just the right type of secondary school, wise teachers will probably have to protect children against ambitious parents, wise parents protect them against ambitious teachers.

The question of what can be asked of children who finish their school education at fifteen is most difficult to answer. Some people in despair say nothing ! But it is probable that the less a community demands, always assuming educated men and women are teaching in the schools, the more it can get—for the minimum of results to be attained leaves the good



teacher free to develop the children along the lines of their individual interests.

On this assumption, if the L.E.A. were satisfied with fair speech, the capacity to answer a question with logical directness either in speech or writing, the ability to deal with the ordinary arithmetical processes that a member of the community in that given environment will need, the practice of bodily and spiritual hygiene, and, finally, one hobby or intellectual interest, the State has done all it can with a difficult problem. Probably the most important result of the instruction given in schools is that the child shall have an intellectual or artistic interest, for it alone will not wear out with his youth. As in modern life books become increasingly more accessible, the most easily satisfied intellectual interest and that which can take a man farthest into the realms of knowledge and imagination is reading; for this reason more and more time is given in schools to training scholars in a love for books and skill in using them. It is interesting in this connection to consider the views on this matter of the Consultative Committee on Books in Public Elementary Schools:

'No good purpose is served by pitching too high the demands which may be made upon children in the opening years of their education. . . . But three things it is not unreasonable to expect before their education in school has ended—that children should obtain such a familiarity with their mother-tongue as will enable them to interpret correctly ideas within their mental range and simply and clearly to express their own; that they should in some degree, if only a small degree, form the habit of using books as sources of information, so that later in life they may be masters of the printed word and not its dupes, and that they should acquire some feeling for what is noble in literature and find in it a food for their imaginations and a tonic for their character.'

It need hardly be observed that it is the more technical side of the life of a school that is here discussed. But the minimum is demanded because only thus can the school have leisure to train children in good habits, to give them time to see the reason of obedience and self-control, to let them be

friendly helpers of each other and independent self-governing people.

So far the school life of a child has been looked at from the angle of the State, for he who pays 'the piper calls the tune.

But in England 'at any rate very great freedom has nearly always been given to the teacher, hence the curriculum of any school does and should depend on the attitude towards life of the staff.<sup>1</sup> From the point of view of the head teacher, the curriculum must satisfy the governing body, and be such that the staff and children will enjoy following it, and will co-operate in the work.

Many authorities omit to consider the class teacher's point of view when dealing with the curriculum, and many specialists are equally blind about their own subjects. It is necessarily an average teacher who is employed in most schools, and as such fairly capable of teaching most ordinary school subjects, together with one, or perhaps two, subjects in which he is more skilled. Head teachers of secondary schools always allow for this specialization in making their schemes of work; the newcomer is asked to take certain general school subjects in his own class, but he is also given some additional work on the subject in which he is more fully qualified.

The problem is more difficult in a primary school with its larger classes and absence of 'floating teachers', but nevertheless it must be faced, and in all the more progressive schools is being faced. Obvious examples occur to each of us. No reasonable head master would leave a man of forty-five, mainly interested in Natural History, to take the Physical Exercise in his own class while on the same staff was a keen young teacher full of enthusiasm for physical training. The younger teacher may also wish to take his own class for Nature Study, but the gain to the other boys in physical training is such that the exchange must obviously be effected.

<sup>1</sup> Payment by results was the worst form of State organization, partly because it took the curriculum and organization of the school almost entirely out of the teachers' hands.

Such changes are fundamental to the work of the school, and no fear of innovation should prevent them. In all the best primary schools they have been made for years with nothing but good results. To-day, if one finds a large school—say of six classes—with every teacher teaching every subject and never seeing another class, one is strongly inclined to think either the head teacher or staff gravely at fault.

Again, in deciding on the inclusion or exclusion of a school subject or on the amount of time to be given thereto, the capacities of the teachers must be taken into account, and the minimum amount of time should be given to those branches of knowledge in which no members of the staff have facility. Let us first take an example from the work of a large London school. In this school, in which there is no one specially interested in history, the head mistress decided that the children should be supplied with a reading-book which they really liked, should be tested on it and helped by their class-teacher in one lesson a week. In other words, she made the environment as suitable as she could by giving the children access to a sound and pleasant book, by encouraging them to make a history book for themselves, by arranging for the teachers to keep a record of the work that was done. On the staff she happened to have two people exceedingly interested in the teaching of geography, and she decided to give extra time to the teaching of that subject ; thus she maintains the policy of using the teaching capacity of the school in the most suitable way. Not only is it an obvious gain for the children in the subjects that are chosen, but also in those left to more general reading and less teaching, for the children at any rate are not bored by inefficient teachers. An obvious corollary to the plan is to appoint a teacher especially interested in history to fill the next vacancy.

If the needs of the community have been considered first in the chapter, and the capacity of the teaching staff second, it is only because the children are bound to submit to the decision of their elders on these matters, and certainly not because the children are the least important section of community or school. The teachers are, however, a most important part in

the child's environment, and it is extremely doubtful if a school that has unhappy and discontented staff can have happy well-educated pupils.

Hence what is the best arrangement for a staff—always assuming it is made up of decent normal workers—is nearly always in the long run best for the scholars.

But there are certain matters which must be looked at first from the point of view of the children, and to which teachers must adapt themselves.

In the primary schools a very obvious example is the children's health, and the need of considering it has already been discussed.

But there are other more strictly scholastic matters in which the child's interest must be consulted, and these for the main part have to do either with the child's environment or his special aptitudes. Let us deal with environment first. Assuming that a minimum should be demanded in the ordinary school subjects by the L.E.A.'s, though the choice of additional work should depend on the capacities of staff and children, nevertheless the resources of the environment should be very seriously considered in order that the child may continue his education on leaving school. In such a case, when it is possible to choose between two subjects or two crafts, the child should begin that for which his home district provides facilities. It is no good, for example, to give much time to teaching children in a very poor school leather work or bead work; they can neither afford nor easily obtain the material. Again, it is wise to encourage drawing and painting as well as music, for even gramophone music is an expensive hobby. Choirs, of course, should be established in every town and village and recruited from musical children as they leave school. For a child in London, undoubtedly part of his education should consist in familiarizing him with the possibility of enjoying a public museum or picture gallery and the necessity of becoming a member of the public library. If in addition he can be induced to join an evening school, the day school has more than justified its work. But many children could, by a keen specialist, be so trained in some hobby that they would spend part of their leisure practising it,

whereas very few would continue to work at the ordinary school subjects, once school is left.

On the other hand, a child in the country or in a very bleak industrial town, has little or no prospect of spending time in picture galleries or museums, and hence if a teacher gives much time to appreciation of pictures or beautiful craft work he must remember this side of training will end with school life. To give the first chapters of a liberal education and realize that it cannot be continued is most depressing, and perhaps for that reason many teachers stress the importance of encouraging the children to read good books. Even the poorest children can be encouraged to buy books, to join the public library. Dramatic work would be a godsend, and dramatic classes should be held in all the evening schools.

It is very doubtful if the teachers in the day schools should do very much teaching in evening schools; the justification is that they, better than any of us, can see what will attract the child leaving school. But the classes they take should be more closely connected with the æsthetic side of a child's life than with the more formal training. A child who is keen enough to continue History or Mathematics on leaving school is already out of leading strings. The less intellectual child still needs much encouragement and he will go to a music class, join a sketching club, do more work in a given craft, if he goes either to a teacher he knows or to one to whom he takes an introduction. The co-operation between the two schools cannot be too close. With the growth of corporate feeling in the elementary schools must come the growth of tradition, and a child should join the evening school with the knowledge that he is promoted to the senior department of the boys' school, to continue, at first in any case, a course suggested by the teacher of his class.

The isolated country school is a real problem and must be dealt with more fully elsewhere. Here it must suffice to suggest that country pursuits must be considered in framing the curriculum. Open-air sketching, studies of plant and bird life, crafts for which local material can be used, weaving on small looms, pottery, basket-making, village plays and concerts, 'home exhibitions', give a varied collection from which

the solitary teacher can select. She, being only one, must put her shoulder only to such wheels to which her special shoulder can lend some push.

It is an interesting question as to how much the curriculum of the ordinary school should be modified for the child of special aptitude. A child of marked ability at the 'cello was taken away from her secondary school and allowed to prepare for Matriculation at home because school hours interrupted her practice hours. The plan has worked excellently. But not all homes can be organized to suit a child's needs in this way and not all people who show a special aptitude early continue to show it later.

This statement is equally true of special inaptitude. Shall a child be allowed to leave Mathematics and Latin because he cannot do them and wants to give further time to the things he can do, Music or Handwork as the case may be?

Such questions can only be solved as they arise and by people who know all the circumstances of the case. But if the curriculum has been made with care and is suitable for the average child in the school, it is a serious matter to let either the child of exceptional ability or exceptional inability omit any large section of the work.

Perhaps the following brief notes will help the reader to look at the problem of the curriculum from a new angle :

1. Though, as has already been stated, the community has a perfect right to state the minimum of attainment for a child leaving a state-aided school, the method by which that standard is reached should in all cases be left to educational experts, as a rule the inspectorate and the teaching staff.

Again, though some communities are almost reactionary in what they demand shall be done in the schools, nevertheless if a study is made of the history of the curriculum, say in English elementary schools, it will be found that there has been a steady growth in educational enlightenment. To-day the outcry against play, music, nature study as unnecessary activities only tending to pamper the working classes is much fainter than it was.

This slow education of the community is an essential part of the work of such professional people as doctors and teachers.

2. As doctors and teachers acquire further insight into and understanding of children's minds and bodies they demand better conditions for them; as teachers become better educated and better trained they tend to find more joy in certain branches of artistic and intellectual life and they want more time and better conditions for the teaching of these subjects. It must be seen that no specialist in his zeal for a subject ignores the conditions that the good doctor and child lover demand for children.

3. Above all, the children of to-day must make the believers in education of to-morrow. Hence, as their life in school will make the foundations of their belief, it must be such that at any rate they can look back on it and say it was good and useful. When this is universally the case, there will be less complaint from the average ratepayer at the cost of education and the time it takes.

4. It is even more true now than when Locke wrote it that : 'The business of education is not, as I think, to make the young perfect in any one of the sciences, but so to open and dispose their minds as may best make them capable of any when they shall apply themselves to it.'

This statement of the aim of education is of great help both in framing a curriculum and in considering the methods of teaching.

## 2. THE OVERCROWDED CURRICULUM

The difficulties inherent in a type of civilization must perforce be felt in a school which in many ways should reflect the life of the State. Thus the many claims made on the time and capacity of a citizen of our own state have their counterpart in the changes demanded by the community in the education of the children. Simple examples of their interrelations are the Safety First campaign so insistently stressed in all large towns, celebrations in connection with the Empire and the Armistice, and, in school as well as out of it, the new campaign for preserving the beauty of the countryside. Indeed it might be said that as soon as any large section of English people wake up to the importance of a new branch of knowledge or skill so soon do they demand that the schools take it up.

It is only the intelligent observer with some historic sense who has any conception of what a burden the increased complexity of modern civilization has laid on the schools. It is quite probable that the child born in 1914 is not and need not be more intelligent than his ancestor born in 1640, but he has to respond intelligently to far more varied stimuli, and in most cases to adapt himself to living with many different types of people. Even the most remote village is beginning to share in those sides of urban civilization which are represented by wifeless, gramophones, weekly dances, cinemas and rides in motor omnibuses.

The curriculum of a typical modern school for children who are likely to finish their education at about fifteen reflects many aspects of complex modern life. Where fifty years ago a good school would have taught the Three R's, Singing, drawing to boys and needlework to girls, and perhaps History or Geography as an additional subject, a similar school now would not only make provision for a very different three R's,—Reading would comprise English Literature, Dramatic work and verse-writing, for example—but would find a place for Nature Knowledge, Music (including rhythmic movement), Painting and some kinds of handcraft other than needlework, Domestic subjects for the elder girls, History and Geography. A formidable list!

Assuming, then, that the child of to-day is not to any great extent unlike the child who became his grandfather, it would appear that the curriculum of the nineteenth century was too limited, formal and rigid. But it is not safe to assert that the characteristic good modern school has found just the right mental fare for children of all ages, and far less safe to assume that even twenty years hence the diet will be the same. Nor is it any more safe to prophesy in what direction the change will go. But undoubtedly there is a growing belief that the curriculum of the modern school is overcrowded, and many teachers are experimenting in ways in which the number of subjects can be reduced, and the mental life of the pupil be made a more orderly procedure.

This is by no means a new problem. An historic attempt to bring order into chaos and throw light into dark corners was



made by Herbart, whose theory that history was the dominant interest of mankind, and to it all other necessary skills and knowledge should be attached, led to the famous doctrine of Correlation and the absurd, false and monotonous teaching that was given by his unintelligent followers. But in the hands of an able teacher Herbart's idea did go far to make school subjects less subjects and more real experience. No man is responsible for the absurdities committed in his name.

The difficulty underlying the doctrine of a central subject to which others are subordinated is that the average child is not a creature of one idea any more than he is a creature of one kind of food. He needs a well-balanced mental diet, and all the subjects introduced into the elementary schools between 1876 have had as a justification the need of educating the child to be a fitting member of a modern State.

But if he is not a creature of one idea, neither should nor can he be a creature of mental shreds and patches. Such teaching does not make a 'full man'. Too many subjects, unless closely related by very skilful syllabuses and teaching, make it almost impossible for children to learn to associate school knowledge with the needs of life; too few subjects mean in most cases that a child lacks some necessary part of a liberal education. It is between this Scylla and Charybdis that the modern teacher has to steer his course.

Each school must steer its own course, for the environment, the capacities of the staff, the varying needs of the scholars, the claims of the community must all be considered. Also it is clear that any reform must begin in the junior school and that according to the results achieved in that department the curriculum of the senior school should be modified. Consequently in this section the suggestions for a simplified and unified curriculum apply to the junior department (for children from seven to eleven) only. But the reader should also refer to Chapter XII, in which there is a discussion on the sort of work that should be done in schools for pupils who leave at sixteen and do not go to a place of higher education.

## (3) SIMPLIFIED CURRICULUM FOR THE JUNIOR SCHOOL (7-11).

It has been assumed that the child's life in the lower part of the school has made him desire to acquire a certain amount of reading, writing and arithmetic. Hence, it should seem reasonable to him that during some part of each day a time should be allotted for the practice of these arts. But apart from the practice lesson when the child sees the need for the repetitive process, his reading, writing and arithmetic should have at least as close connection with his needs as has the reading of the adult with his needs and interests. Nor is it necessary to label subjects until the children begin to collect so much experience that a classification of material is essential.

Now certainly up to eleven the experience a child is acquiring needs fewer pigeon-holes than that of the older students. Just as Chemistry is Chemistry to the Matriculant but to the chemist it at once becomes a matter of various major and minor divisions, so to the child History, Scripture, Literature all fall under the heading 'Stories'. 'What have you had at school to-day?' was asked a little child. 'Oh! just stories about Moses, King Arthur and the robin. I liked the robin best.'

Why not, then, use the child's suggestion and organize the curriculum more simply?

Such simplification is undoubtedly overdue and many schools are trying to satisfy the growing child's interest in life and his surroundings by more natural means than that of introducing him to the adult-made classification that often fails to satisfy his curiosity about life as he knows it and, consequently, at the best seems unreasonable, at the worst boring.

It seems possible that the following scheme of work, in no sense original, for it is but the result of consideration of Professor Dewey's work in American schools, might achieve both a unification of the child's experience and a simplification of the curriculum.

*Subjects in the Curriculum.*

It is no good making a scheme that appears to simplify school work to the outside critic but to the teacher and child

only means a re-arrangement of subject-matter. In actual practice most teachers would find that time had to be allotted for the following activities :

(1) Physical Training that should include training in the hygiene of life, and all forms of activities that help a child to a healthy body and a realization of a delight therein, e.g. the occasional talk on health, the periodic medical inspection, the daily recreation or ' free play ', the physical training, organized games, dancing.

(2) English. Here of course would be taken speech training, reading aloud, writing both of prose and verse. Above all, time would be left for class reading and discussion of stories, plays and verse that were suitable to the age and capacity of the class and would lead them to take delight in literature ; and perhaps more important still, there would be time for steady personal searching through books for the fare that the reader needs. In the ordinary home there are times when even the most active child is compelled to amuse himself with a book. The silent reading time in school should correspond to that period and the child should be allowed ' to amuse himself with a book '.

(3) Some of the most keen educators maintain that Arithmetic should be a method and not a subject and should arise out of the handwork, house-keeping, etc., as it is needed. But if it is only because in Arithmetic the practice lesson must play so great a part, it seems as if it should have a definite place on the time-table. Very often the lesson would be used to make the accurate plan needed for some model, the pattern needed for some theatrical costume, the comparison of areas of countries, etc., and only by such use of the time can children realize the practical value of the subject. Also out of the child's needs to manage money, to measure stuff, to make plans, to read scales, the need for lessons devoted to acquiring skill in dealing with number would arise and the time set apart on the time-table for Arithmetic would be available.

(4) The World we Live in. It has been stated above that the child between six and seven has developed a deeper interest in his environment and that stories have introduced him to the past and to other lands than his own. He has not

sufficient systematic knowledge to need the ordered classification of Geography, History, Nature Study, and yet he is eager for experiences that make the necessary foundation of the later formal work in such subjects. Hence, in all good schools much work is done in order to give children a sense of the past, an appreciation of their home environment and some knowledge of how other peoples live. Every teacher realizes that her work in History could sometimes be done in English and that Nature Study and Geography are but two aspects of the same study.

Consequently if Dewey's theory of the curriculum could be adapted for English children and their work in History, Geography, Nature Study could start at the growing point of their interest in their environment and not be classified as subjects until the necessity arose, much time would be saved and much formal knowledge, so easily forgotten, avoided. It is impossible to make a scheme here that would suit any school, for by the nature of the course it must be adapted to the children's interests and environment. But during their investigation into the environment the children should amass experience that ultimately could be classified as follows:

A. A study of the physical environment.

B. A study of people.

Whether the emphasis was on environment or people would depend to a great extent on the qualifications of the teacher, the interests of the children and on the school locality; but both sides of life should receive consideration in planning the work of the school.

A. The study of physical environment would of course continue the practical work out of doors that had been part of the child's weekly experience. Plants, animals, the lie of the land, weather conditions and changes of seasons would give ample material for observation throughout his stay in the junior school.

Records would always be kept, and in connection with them would arise, for example, the first need for maps. Only after he has tried to make a map to show where adder's tongue or bee orchis grows, the lark's nest or the squirrel's hoard can be found, will he realize the need for accuracy; as he tries to

record his longer walks, by a map in his record book he will find he must use a different scale than when he drew his journey to the adder's tongue, two fields away from the school. Indeed, at the end of a term of field work the child will be ready to appreciate the six-inch Ordnance Map.

Again, out of the study of bird life would come some knowledge of countries to the north and south of his own—a knowledge that would be developed by his work on the lives of the peoples of those countries. To the child between seven and eleven, feeling out for all sorts of new experience, the study of the rising and the setting of the sun, the coming of Winter, the flight of fieldfares and starlings from their summer quarters all lead to constant questioning of the countries to the East and West, North and South. Thus constantly his thought is encouraged to dwell on those distant lands; and the great prairies of the West, the mysterious lands of the East, will provide a store of exciting and romantic stories of the ways of life of other people.

Perhaps enough has been written to suggest how such a course would knit more closely together a child's knowledge of the world he lives in, and give him the facts of plant, animal and human life that he will want for the study of Geography, Biology and History that await him in the senior school.

But one point of method must be stressed. This course is essentially practical—it has its origin in the study of life and natural phenomena in the child's district—and it grows from that. When experience can no longer be first-hand—as, for instance, when bird migrations or the rising and setting of the sun turn the child's thoughts to unknown places and peoples—still the satisfaction of curiosity must be self-satisfaction as far as possible. Not all his questions must be answered by the teacher, for the course should give much training in the use of books and pictures. Indeed, the teacher should only give lessons that either arouse further interest in a problem and so encourage the children to further study of accessible sources of knowledge, or on a subject in which the class shows genuine curiosity which they are unable to satisfy for themselves.

If such work is to be done in schools the teacher must not begin with a fixed idea of what a class should have done during

any given term or year. One set of children will be far more interested in a regional survey of their own neighbourhood, and will use more time and energy than will another class who soon turn their attention to distant lands. The children in one junior school known to the writer are at present intensely interested in weather in the Atlantic and in America, because their town builds aeroplanes. In another school a term's work has centred round docks, as the result of a visit to a large liner.

It is here that a set syllabus is such a danger, for if a teacher must get through so many history stories, so many lessons on the peoples of other lands, so much botany, etc., he often has to get the 'stuffed' child rather than the child who will become Bacon's 'full man'. Not until schools have used such a scheme as will leave room and time for children to work at their own rate and along their own lines will anyone be able to say dogmatically how much can be done in a term, or lay down definite lines of work.

B. The study of peoples will not be divorced from the study of English or that of the physical world. In all probability, story-telling, play-making, and the reading for enjoyment will give a child his first introduction to history. Heroic stories follow naturally on fairy stories and myths, for undoubtedly somewhere between seven and eleven the average child asks 'Is it true?' of his story. Here again books and pictures should rouse a child's curiosity and interest. The story of Hector must have an historic setting and though Hector himself must be pictured from Homer's words, his armour, his chariots, the land of Troy must be made clear by illustrations. So the first lessons in world history will be the stories of great heroic people, the first lessons in British history again the stories of heroes, but also the stories of how people used to live in, say, the town or village in which the child lives.

If course A is eminently a training in observation and experiment, course B is above all things an introduction to books and pictures as invaluable sources of second-hand knowledge. Hence it is even more important that from the first week to the last in the junior school the child is encouraged to use books for himself, to see pictures and not to learn by listening. If the teacher adheres to the advice on story-telling given

on p. 33 and only tells such stories as he feels he must, the children will have much material to read.

The idea underlying such a scheme is that the child acquires knowledge as he needs it for his natural activities. Thus, for example, history must be content to be a handmaiden to the child's love of drama, for often it will be in order to dress a play or dramatize a ballad that the child searches books for information. Again, gaps in the child's knowledge of the peoples of the world will be filled in, sometimes through the heroic story of the fighter or explorer, sometimes because the study of the lives of people of his own environment will lead him to asking about people in distant lands. Always indeed must the teacher be alert and eager to help his class to fill in gaps in their knowledge, remembering, however, that a gap is not a gap for the child unless he realizes it to be one! A teacher may force knowledge of a sort into a pupil's mind, but that is a very different thing from filling a gap.

It may be asked how a couple of subjects—the study of peoples and the study of the physical environment—will simplify the curriculum, as similar material is being used as in Geography, History and Nature Study lessons. The simplification should result from the following facts:

(a) Such a course will make learning easier to children, for they will have a considerable share in the selection of the material they study and it will satisfy some need. Again and again must it be repeated that the normal child learns only if he is interested and hence feels the need for learning.

(b) Though the child is studying three aspects of knowledge when English is also taken into account, it has been shown that the study of peoples is a bridge subject often being taken as part of the literature course, often arising from the study of environment. These three subjects are indeed so often correlated that work in one constantly directs the child's attention to some aspect of life needing work in another branch—an experience which the child rarely has if the curriculum is divided into the usual school subjects.

(c) The constant association of one branch of work with another systematizes knowledge, and it is such knowledge that can be retained and used. Hence it makes for the

educated child, for if education is to mean anything it surely should mean a store of experience that can be recalled with some ease and re-fashioned to shape a definite purpose.

(5) *Arts and Crafts.*

Children learn in order to do, and so a great part of each day should go in some form of practical work ; but how much drawing, carpentry, weaving, modelling, building, needlework will be done depends on the lines suggested by the children's interest and the ability of the staff to help them to acquire a given art.

Drawing and painting must at any rate be a means used of recording plant and animal life, of making notes of costumes and properties needed for a play. But whether children give more time to painting—illustrating their stories, for example—or designing book covers, depends almost entirely on the qualifications of the staff. If there is no keen teacher it is better to use time in other ways, since in art bad teaching is worse than no teaching at all.

Modelling is a most valuable way of learning shapes, and a teacher with any skill in this art can add enormously to the joy of studying fruits and plant growth on the one hand, historic buildings on the other. In all such cases, though the art or handicraft is used as a means to an end, many children will find it an interesting occupation in itself. At this point specialist teaching should be available, and in all junior schools there should be at least one enthusiast for Arts and Crafts. It is surely a pity to divide this group into Drawing, Painting and Handwork ; they are and should be closely akin. A child wants to make ; sometimes it is a picture, sometimes a model ; sometimes his pattern should be in water-colour, sometimes it should be with silks, sometimes it should be woven. Always, however, the making of the design is an integral part of craft work, and if for this reason only the subjects of drawing, painting, weaving, modelling, stitchery should not be separated. Sometimes it is not until a child reaches the senior school that he wishes to give all his time to some one branch of art.

(6) *Needlework.*

It seems unnatural to separate sewing from the other crafts,



and it is very doubtful if it should be divorced. Modern needlecraft is so much simpler and more easily acquired than was that demanded of our grandmothers that it might easily be given less time, and would probably be done better if looked on as a branch of handwork. However, whether it be taken in an Arts and Crafts Course, closely associated with the children's work on man and his surroundings and occupations, or whether it appear as Needlework, it will never be well done until it is associated with the child's interests; he and she will need to dress dolls for the puppet play or for the doll's house, make clothes and properties for their own theatre, and for these needs sewing must be acquired as a means to an end. It is surprising how many children enjoy sewing when they approach it from this angle.

#### (7) *Music.*

It is hard for a lover of music to write with detachment of the part it should play in education; but here if anywhere the capacity of the staff must be taken into account. Children love singing and rhythmic work, are sensitive to melody, and if anyone on the staff can play to them, help them to sing better the songs they love, teach them to get the rhythm and time of their favourites, to hear bass as well as treble, and to 'step' notes and rhythms, there is a new happiness in the school, a new serenity. But if music is only a technical lesson in which certain facts are to be taught, certain skill in sight-singing acquired, it need have little time given to it. Indeed, except for choral singing of hymns and folk songs, it is highly probable that the time can be better spent on some other art.

## CHAPTER X

### ORGANIZATION OF WORK

#### I. SYLLABUSES

**E**VEN the youngest of teachers going into school for the first time is expected to draw up a syllabus of the course of lessons he proposes to take. From his syllabus for a course of six or eight lessons, it is a far cry to

those made by the head master of a school, in conjunction with the specialist, for the work during a session on a given subject ; yet the problem underlying the making of a syllabus is the same for both and may perhaps be best stated in metaphor : it is similar to the problem of selecting the colours for the warp and the woof in weaving material—only the experienced can say the resultant effect and yet the colours must be selected by the beginner without experience. In the same way the beginner must make his syllabus, and though he may know his material fairly well, he cannot know how it will appear when used as a series of lessons for a given class. For the result to be good, the material must be suitable for the class and, equally important, the class must react suitably to the material. Surely a far more difficult problem to solve than any selection of warp and woof. But the statement of the two interacting conditions does help even the most inexperienced to tackle the problem in the right way, as two conditions of a good syllabus at once become apparent.

(1) Before the syllabus is even provisionally made, the teacher must be conversant with the whole of the subject-matter he hopes to teach during the period.

(2) He must know the ' previous knowledge ' of the class, and as much as possible about their attitude to the given subject.

A short discussion on these two points may be valuable.

1. Because it is necessary that syllabuses should be made by people who know the subject-matter, in most schools a specialist frames the syllabus and the head master, in collaboration with him, 'so modifies it that it may correlate better with other branches of the pupils' work. In many cases in such correlated subjects as literature, history and geography the work of the school would gain enormously in precision if the three specialists consulted before they submitted their respective syllabuses to the head master ; but in all cases in a good school the head master sees that the work of any given class shall be as unified as possible and for that reason he reads a history syllabus with the recollection of the work being done in geography, etc., and returns it for possible modifications when necessary.

In the case of the teacher in training who is making his first syllabuses, the problem is, though less complicated, the same. In most cases, however, he will not be able to choose his material as he must conform to the school syllabus. If he is fortunate he will find himself faced with some such task as that of preparing six lessons on Shakespeare's *Henry V* for his literature, while in Geography he is devoting the same number to France. But the fortune is more apparent than real as the reader will see if he sets himself the task of preparing these syllabuses. And it is a nice point to decide if it would be easier to deal with Elizabethan England or the times of Henry V when selecting the History for this class. To make matters more difficult he will often be expected to prepare his syllabuses before he has met his class and hence he is in the amazing position of a weaver who must choose the warp without knowing the woof.

But even under such circumstances the beginner would make a better syllabus if he could be induced to read through his play, consider his region in Geography or period of History as a whole and then make his notes of what he thought should be taken with boys of a given age. The next step is to see how much of this subject-matter he can give in the lessons allotted to him—always remembering the conditions of good teaching. Now his subject-matter should sort itself—some must be omitted, some will at once appear suitable for individual work—some will follow as an application or corollary to the main lesson. All this work will take time, but if the student could only be persuaded to spend much time and thought on his first syllabuses, he would be surprised at the confidence he would acquire and the feeling of mastery over the subject. And no matter what kind of a school he attended, he has his own past experience—and that of his fellow-students—to help him in the apportioning of his subject-matter.

2. In one respect the beginner is confronted with a greater difficulty than is the good head master or specialist, for they know something of the characteristics of each class and should have a fair idea of their 'previous knowledge'. On these two points the student must get as much help as he possibly can from the class teacher. He can, for example,

see the syllabus of what has been done, and he often has an opportunity of submitting his first plan to the teacher of the subject. He knows he must not write 'previous knowledge none', and consequently must find out on what he is to build his series of lessons. If a class teacher finds a student is really zealous for such information, he will almost invariably give help. And such help is essential. For example, it is one thing to decide that a class who is keen on acting and has had some experience shall produce parts of *Henry V* as it would have been produced by a travelling company of boy players in Shakespeare's time, it is another to make a syllabus with this in view for a class of boys uninterested and inexperienced in dramatic work. Again, France can be divided into natural regions in one lesson by a class already conversant with the major natural regions of Europe; but if the class has never heard of natural regions, then the main part of six lessons could easily be devoted to a study of that subject—France in each case being the illustrative material.

It is so obvious that the material should be at the teacher's finger-ends, that the knowledge and aptitudes of the class should be known, that an apology is perhaps due to the intelligent beginner for this lengthy insistence on these points. And yet long years of experience have led most trainers to conclude that to get students to know the material they propose to teach before they plan their syllabus, much less give their first lesson; to get students really to find out what their class has done—though it may be difficult; to get these two fundamental conditions of good preparation is more difficult than to make Conservatives and Bolsheviks see each other's points of view.

Perhaps the following tests of a good syllabus, obvious though they be, may help inexperienced students who take this side of their work seriously.

(1) The syllabus must take into account the children's past knowledge.

(2) Each lesson should deal with a topic that has connection with the work done in the previous lesson and will naturally lead to the next lesson.

(3) A syllabus to be satisfactory must be arranged in such a way as to ensure the class doing most of the work.<sup>1</sup>

(4) To cover the syllabus in the allotted time should be possible on the assumption of steady activity from class and teacher. If the syllabus is so full that it gives no time for discussion, individual work, revision or re-statement of difficult points, it is too long. If on the other hand it does not keep all active and hard-working it is too meagre.

## 2. THE TIME-TABLE

The making of a good time-table is one of the tests of a good organizer and a section on Time-Tables might, with some justice, be declared out of place in *A First Book of Teaching*. However, every reader of this book has probably worked for many years under time-table conditions and a knowledge of what conditions a good time-table should fulfil may help him to fit in more easily to his first school and encourage him to see that as far as is possible he makes the working conditions of his own class ideal.

A. There are three factors to be considered in the making of a time-table :

- (1) The children.
- (2) The staff.
- (3) The building and equipment.

I. *The Children*. Obviously a time-table is made to enable the scholars to work under the best possible conditions, and hence the first criticism of one's rough draft of a time-table should be to look at it from the point of view of each of the several school units. The class time-table should pass the following tests successfully:

(a) Every day's work should be well balanced; there should be sufficient time for healthy exercise; sufficient time allotted to at least two of the three types of lesson. Thus, if a class begins the morning by forty-five minutes' work on Arithmetic, the following lesson could be History, but it

<sup>1</sup> Thus, for example, a syllabus of history that necessitates the teacher talking and the class listening is bad. It would be better to take what seemed less vital work, but work which children could do from the school textbook.

would be a pity if the third were Geography. For in such a case, though the knowledge and skill to be acquired in Arithmetic are different from those aimed at in Geography and History, yet there is sufficient similarity in the kind of mental effort required to make the morning's work unnecessarily tiring. It would be better to try for some such arrangement as Arithmetic followed by fifteen minutes of Physical Training; Geography followed by five minutes of free play and an English Literature lesson where knowledge and skill would be subordinate to enjoyment.

To such a morning a suitable afternoon's work should certainly include a long lesson on some handicraft, and, if a large proportion of the time in any one of the morning's subjects was devoted to the acquisition of a generalization, individual work demanding the application of the newly acquired knowledge.

(b) The child's physical and mental needs must, therefore, be the foundation of a good time-table which, clearly, is nothing but the means by which the curriculum of the school becomes manifest in the day's work. But each day should demonstrate the attention given by the staff to the child's mental diet. To take another example. The curriculum may take account of the necessity of children's knowing at any rate sufficient about their bodies to make them practical hygienists; but if this knowledge were given in a weekly lesson to little children instead of in the form of daily inspections and a very short talk, it would, to many people, seem to be a bad arrangement of the time-table.

Again, two hours a week given to formal physical training is as much as many schools can spare; by a good time-table the head teacher would ensure that in the junior school this two hours was so arranged that every child had at least fifteen minutes of training daily and in the upper school each class was in the gymnasium at least three times a week.

(c) Thus the essentials of a good time-table from the child's point of view are firstly sufficient variety of activities to avoid undue strain and secondly due regard for health. But there is a third essential, common to children and staff, that can suitably be stated here.

The time-table is a means by which good conditions of mental and physical work are made habitual and if sufficient consideration has been paid to the children's and staff's physical and mental needs, it is honoured in the observance. But it should not be regarded as a scheme of life from which it is never possible to depart without special reference to some high authority.

Any wise ruler of a home looks with smiling scorn at the woman who can never alter her dates for starting fires or for turning out a room ; it is no less ridiculous for a time-table, merely a convenience to teacher and taught, to be allowed to become a sacred form of procedure.

II. *The Staff.* (a) It has so often been stated in this book that the happiness of staff and children are closely connected that, *mutatis mutandis*, what has been said of the right kind of time-table for children refers equally to staff ; for this reason the time-table that is most difficult to make is that of the specialist.

If a teacher of a junior class works mainly in his own room, he gets a varied day's work, though he may take additional drawing when his class goes to singing. But once a man becomes a specialist in geography, history, music, mathematics, as the case may be, he should have a lighter time-table because psychology upholds common sense in the belief that a change of work to some extent overcomes fatigue. It is true that he gets a change of class and subject of lesson, but if his syllabus has been well made he is conscious throughout his day's work of the part each lesson plays in his plan, and the concentration of aim is wearying. Probably the most marked examples of this danger are found in the time-tables of those who teach music, art or physical exercises.

(b) The solution of the above difficulty is not obvious and organizers deal with it in various ways, unless, alas ! they ignore it. Nevertheless, a solution that ought to be considered is to attach all full-time members of a staff to a class and to see that a definite amount of time is daily spent working on general subjects in that room. Thus a man taking physical training would certainly be a person to be treated with respect when he took health talks or hygiene lessons in his own class.

And most specialists, if of course they are teachers first and specialists after, take pleasure in meeting the children of their class to which they are attached in some other way than as a teacher of one subject.

Primary schools, and even the new Modern Secondary, will often be without a 'floating' teacher and in such schools the plan has been evolved of making one teacher responsible for the syllabus, library and apparatus in a given subject, but directly responsible for the teaching in two or three classes only, thus leaving him a fair time for work in his own room. There is, naturally, a tendency for the class of the geography specialist to find most subjects have a bearing on geography; but that attitude rights itself next year when the boys go to some other enthusiast.

The time-table is a frame or scheme of the day's work, and the teacher must have all possible freedom to arrange the work for any given time as he likes. Hence the more often the time-table can give, as it were, a general recommendation rather than a specific instruction, the better. To take examples, that are surely not contentions, Mathematics should appear on a time-table for so many days of the week and not Arithmetic, Practical Arithmetic, Algebra, etc.; English should appear daily of course; but as English and not as Reading, Composition, Literature, Word Building, Dictation, Speech Training.<sup>1</sup>

If the organizer ensures that English has been given sufficient time during the session and term and week, he has done his part. The teacher responsible for the subject must have the power of using the time as he thinks best.

To a young teacher the caution must be given that the greater freedom he has, the more carefully he must plan his work. He must see, for example, that his keenness for play-writing does not take up so much of his English lessons that his class gets no training in silent reading.

At times it is permissible to alter the time-table completely. Thus an hour may be needed one week for Nature Study and the next week can be utilized better for an extra geography

<sup>1</sup> An example from a time-table known to the writer.



lesson. Assuming that by the change the teacher does not make life difficult for some other teacher he should feel perfectly free to carry it through.

(c) Perhaps a counsel that can be given to young teachers is to consider every subject as of at least equal importance as their own. A critic of a staff meeting has food for much meditation in the fact that the mathematics man suggests literature can be taken the last hour of the afternoon, but that his own subject must always come first ; that the history man can see with equanimity drawing put at 3 p.m. on a winter's day, while he views with horror the thought of history coming after an exciting music lesson.

There are certain hours at which most people do their best work, but as it is equally important that each subject should be taught under the best conditions, these hours are not the right of any specialist. In the school with a curriculum adapted to the child's needs, at any rate in England where school hours are not unduly long, this striving for the best hours of the day is not necessary.

Finally, a class teacher is responsible for a good deal of the children's individual work, and he must see to it that they organize their work with due regard to the various subjects. Nothing is more likely to estrange children from learning than the feeling that one specialist has scant respect for the work done in other subjects.

III. *Building and Equipment.* (a) To a certain extent the restrictions of building and equipment are so marked that they force the time-table in a certain direction. Thus if there is only one piano and one possible room for music, music lessons must be given there, though it may mean a less good time-table for some one as a result. Moreover, if the music-room is also the central hall the time-tables of the adjoining classes must be so elastic that silent work can go on during music lessons. The strain to teacher and class of making themselves heard against chorus singing in the hall is obvious.

(b) Again, handwork needs a special apparatus and work tables, and as it is a growing practice to teach through doing, more schools should be equipped as the Garry schools are—

where at least half the rooms are suitable for manual work. But until that is the case as far as possible handwork must be taken in the one room equipped for it. Many such restrictions thus modify the first rough draft of a time-table: the need for physical exercise to be taken in a hall or a playground, the need of the lightest room for drawing, the necessity of wall space in some subjects for special pictures and charts and so for special rooms. In schools with more class-rooms than classes the arrangements are easier; but in primary schools, where even the handwork or science room is nearly always also a class-room, it is worth much time and thought to ensure that the best possible use is made of these 'specialized' rooms. A maker of very good time-tables once said that there was no difficulty that time and patience would not overcome—probably an unduly optimistic statement. But no maker of a time-table should give any member of staff, any class of children less good conditions of work than the best use of the building and equipment permit.

### 3. EXAMINATIONS

It is perhaps necessary to write on examinations in a section dealing with the organization of school work if it is only to warn the beginner of the waste of time and energy when too much importance is attached to them. In the elementary schools, when grants were paid on the results of an annual examination of the work, time-table and type of teaching were but means for getting as good a result as possible and the schools were organized for this purpose alone. It was a bad system and unfortunately, as evil lives a long time after a system is changed, still too many head teachers over-examine and too many assistant teachers catch examination fever and hand on the very infectious disease to the best people in their class. It is obvious that the child who is really indifferent to school work does not catch the disease, whereas the child who tends to take school life over-seriously is pitifully susceptible to it.

Hence the first thing to say about examinations is that they should be a natural part of the school work and no formal organization, no serious warning as to their importance should

induce staff or pupils to think the examination more important than any other part of the school life. It is, as every good teacher knows, the process of education that is important; the growing power to think, the more sensitive appreciation of art, the more cunning hand, the more sympathetic mind.

Whether a child of eleven can get four sums right out of four ought only to be important in so far as it shows the teacher where the boy needs help. For that purpose, and that purpose alone, are examinations justified for children under sixteen—they show teacher and pupil what is known and where further help and work are required.

Even such tests should not be too frequent. In a well-organized course the child's daily or weekly work, his sums, his map, his answer to a question, his reading of a poem should show if he has made the right use of his lesson. Learning is not such a rapid process that it is essential to inspect the results thereof every month, and when monthly or, worse still, weekly tests are set, there is strong temptation for the teacher to stress the parts of the work that are easily reproduced in a written paper.

It is impossible to test some of the most valuable experiences in life, the effect of interesting talk, the hearing of a symphony, the quiet reading of a poem. And to labour over such points as Beethoven wrote the symphony and that it has four movements, of which the names must be learnt, is to give somewhat unimportant memory work too high a value. If the reader quietly goes over his own experience of school life, he will find many examples of examinations which broke into the even tenor of his work, forced him while revising to use time that could have been better employed, and generally resulted in some additional days of wasted time after the examinations, when a harried staff marked papers and the class felt that no work should be demanded of them.

Nevertheless most educationists would agree that from time to time, at least in early youth, there should be a stock-taking of a pupil's mental outfit. Ideally a careful and sympathetic oral examination would be the most searching test, but while classes are large the written examination will hold its own. But if it is really to be a test of a term's work

for the children below eleven, of a year's work for older children, it must be taken as simply and naturally as the terminal medical inspection. Any suggestion from the teacher that a boy should work because the examination is coming, any obvious worry about results will defeat the end in view, for the nervous child will use much of his mental energy in worrying, the child who learns and forgets easily will cram, and the indifferent will remain indifferent.

Yet if we consider these three types of children, it is obvious that true education should help the nervous child to serenity, the facile learner to work more thoroughly and dig deeper, the indifferent child to care.

Joan, aged thirteen, came out 34th in a class examination of 35 children. 'How bad your result is,' said her perturbed and ambitious father.

'Yes,' answered Joan, 'but it could be worse, for I could have been 35th.'

Her sister, on the other hand, was fretting because she was 3rd in her class and last term she had been 1st. Neither child, clearly, took examinations in the right spirit.

What form then can this mental stock-taking profitably take?

Firstly, both staff and children must look upon examinations as mental stock-taking and make no more preparation for them than for a material stock-taking. For example, a week before the examination a teacher could suggest that a break should be made in the course and the class should discuss what they had learnt that term. An hour's preparation, spent in looking over notes and essays, forty minutes' questioning of the teacher by the children on difficulties and the matter should be left.

Secondly, the class should feel that the aim of the examination is really to help them; that the examiner will try to find out what they know and discover in what sections of their work they need help. Hence the papers should be returned to the examinees with suggestions for further work.

'Look up this in —': 'Read X's answer': 'Quite clear': 'Very good, but don't forget that climate also must be considered': 'Don't spoil a good answer by word-

spinning' : and so on ; such comments are far more profitable than a numerical mark.

Thirdly, the examination should aid the pupil to see how he stands in his class, and where his work has been successful ; but it should not be a competition to beat John Hard. Hence, as in so many university examinations, the list, if it is to be graded at all, should be in three classes—average, above and below. If John Hard is above average he can either go on with that subject, if that is his heart's desire, help a weaker brother, or leave it while he makes some other branch of work more secure. If he is above the average in every subject he needs a promotion or some new field for his energy.

And lastly, no one should be punished on the results of an examination. At once it makes the examination unduly important, and it is the steady habit of doing thoughtful work that needs to be encouraged and not passing tests.

So far the problem of the competitive examination of the extra-school type has been neglected.

A former head master of Harrow asserted that no boy should be submitted to the ordeal of a competitive examination under the age of fifteen and the majority of teachers seem to be of the same opinion. Dr. Norwood's statement was made in connection with the Common Entrance Examination which admits boys to the public schools. The competition for some schools is exceedingly severe and the work in the preparatory schools comes to be one long training for the examination. The great majority of preparatory schools are private ventures, and ambitious parents who want their sons to get into the 'right' school, only send them to one which gets good results. Hence in many cases parents, head masters and class masters are all intent on the examination which ends the boy's life in his preparatory school. Only the English passion for games and the rigorously methodical life the boys live save the situation.

Yet, if the correspondents to the Educational Supplement of *The Times* are to be trusted, the boys go into the public school with knowledge of classics and skill in Mathematics that they may not need for years—at any rate if they find themselves in one of the smaller public schools. Thus the

curriculum of the school, the training of boys are subordinated to the needs of the brilliant pupils who will gain places in the most famous schools.

This examination has been dealt with at some length because it influences both the curricula and methods of teaching in many types of primary school. Most of the readers of this book will, as they read the above criticism, have another examination in mind—that by which they gained places, at the age of eleven, in their secondary schools.

The undesirability of letting this examination loom too large has already been suggested.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Norwood would have said 'Abolish it', and he would have with him the vast majority of teachers. The solution of the problem of how to select children for the secondary schools that was given on p. 108 was higher education for all who desire it. But failing this, surely a far greater use of intelligence tests, supplemented by the child's records of his last year's work, would meet the case. There are now standardized tests of children's native ability and what knowledge a child has at eleven is at the best of no great moment.

Until this solution is reached teachers must regard it as professionally disloyal and morally wrong to coach children. Teachers have this reform in their own hands; there are so many free places to be filled; the examiners desire only to get the most promising type of child for the type of school; they will find that type far more easily if the children take the examination and not the teachers.

## CHAPTER XI

### NOTES ON THE STATE SCHOOLS' FUNCTIONS

#### I. THE NURSERY SCHOOL

**T**HE great need for children under five is to have physical and mental room in which to grow freely; and growth for them implies the use of bodily organs. Hence, in a nursery school the day is divided between

<sup>1</sup> See p. 108.

rest, meals and play as much as possible out of doors, of course ; and out of these needs arises all the training the child must have. He must, for example, learn to be quiet at a certain time and not disturb his fellows ; he must learn to lay a table, eat his lunch carefully and clear away. He has entire freedom at play until he begins disturbing other people, and then he learns he cannot safely knock down other people's castles or take their engines. He is, of course, at the stage when his dominant need is to learn to know his own body and acquire elementary control of its parts, and to assimilate what his sense organs can teach him of the world he lives in. The toys he lifts, handles, uses, the games he plays either alone or with others, the offices he performs either for himself or his community, all are part of the natural way that a child acquires a knowledge of his body and its powers and his environment. Thus, for example, he learns how far he can throw and much about space from his ball games, how far he can reach and something about weight when he lays a table, the need of cleanliness when he washes his hands and cleans his teeth.

His growing feeling for rhythm is encouraged by the songs that are sung to him, the songs and games in which he is encouraged to take a part, and his love of colour from his painting and play with dolls. But before he leaves home or the nursery school for a larger school at five he should have acquired regular bodily habits, capacity to look after himself in such things as putting on shoes, using a handkerchief, etc., getting and clearing away a simple meal, playing a round game with other children, and helping others younger or less able than himself. He should also be able to amuse himself, co-operate to some extent in free play with other children and enjoy listening to stories that are read or told to him. All such training implies a steady growth in capacity for verbal expression, and power to understand the spoken word. There is hardly a game played by a child that is not an indirect method of speech training.

## 2. THE PRIMARY SCHOOL

This term is used to designate the various types of school for children between the ages of five and eleven, the school to which the average child goes from home, or nursery school. Assuming his training has been on the lines indicated in the previous section, he will begin with a fair amount of self-reliance and independence and some control of his anti-social tendencies.

a. *The First Years*<sup>1</sup> in the Infants Classes.

As it is important that the child should feel the change from home or nursery school as little as possible, at first the usual daily routine should continue. The time for lunch, round games, rests, the play out of doors will still be there, and the fact that the stories he hears are longer, more varied, and more often read will be hardly noticed. He, too, will possibly remain longer at his self-appointed occupations, and he will be more ambitious for results. Thus, he notices more carefully and puts more realistic details in his drawing, he needs objects for the shop and begins to make things where before he was content to imagine his goods, or use any objects at hand.

His sense of rhythm is also developed, and he not only learns the words of his games but he learns many more nursery rhymes. Above all, he must be able to amuse himself, to live harmoniously with his class and be more helpful to his teacher.

But as he settles down in his new school a new world begins to open to him. He finds it is not only grown-up people who can read and write, but the older children in his class; he sees around his room and in the cupboards all sorts of pictures of which he would like to know more; he sees people playing games that depend on counting; he hears Harold saying, 'Do you know two and two always make four'; he is told he may have six more bricks. And each of these examples only

<sup>1</sup> These years from five to seven are still for the most part spent in Infant Schools; but the intention expressed by the Act of is that Primary Education from at least five to eleven should proceed continuously with no change of school at seven years.



stands for dozens of incentives that the good teacher sees the child has in order that he may realize the necessity of learning to write, read and count. The child becomes far more interested in his environment and his questions grow in numbers and variety. His interest in what his people did when they were little children leads to his first searching after the sense of time, his desires to imitate lead to his learning to cook, to sweep, to build, to become a chauffeur, omnibus driver or city man—in other words, to be interested in the lives of other people. He may keep a book of his pets and his garden, with pictures and perhaps the first attempt at writing. He certainly should be working in a sand pile or in a garden.

All this may sound trivial to the outsider, but if the child is kept healthily employed at his self-chosen occupations, is told of the past as the opportunity arises; if his questions are answered and his powers of observation rejoicingly encouraged, somewhere before seven he has unconsciously acquired that background of experience, and that urge for further skill that make the acquisition of reading and writing an easy process lasting over a few months. But until this background has been obtained, until the child feels the same desire to read, for example, as the growing boy or girl has to play an instrument or to acquire modern dancing, attempting to teach him is sheer waste of time. Every one knows of the awful boredom, the waste of time that result from insisting on the indifferent boy learning to dance. It is only because little children cannot express what they feel, and are, very often, gently indifferent that the absurdity of thrusting formal training on them is not apparent to all.

Probably before he is seven, the child who lives in the environment where reading and writing are part of the daily life will desire to acquire these arts, though he will not necessarily express it in the way of the little boy aged six who said, 'Mother, I want to learn to read quickly, not in little lessons.' But he will match words and stories, pictures and numbers; he will fill in completion tests on his reading (i.e. look on page so and so for the name of the little boy), and by seven he should, for some part of each day, read an easy story for

pleasure, or read a story he knows well to a younger child. Not all children will, of course, read even the most 'pictured' story for pleasure. The more active they are, the more they are filled with the desire to do things and make things for themselves, the less likely they are to want the somewhat passive experience of reading. But such active children are often led to read through their desire to find out how to do something—a game, for example—or to see how to make a model or to write. The average child in the school environment is sure to need help in the acquisition of experience of some kind or other, and if a teacher or mother does not intellectually 'coddle' him by telling him what the picture says or how a thing should be done he will make the effort to learn for himself. Then the reading lesson for him should be a very simple account of how to do something, or of what other active children do ; under such conditions he will find reading useful.

Teachers always reply, 'How about the child who shows no inclination to read?' There are, it is true, children who develop slowly on this side—the girl, for example, who loves dolls and games and is still playing with dolls' houses at fourteen, the boy who is always using tools. But in the writer's experience the boy or girl who did not want to read early still reads atrociously in Standard III or IV, and never for pleasure, and the slow developer, left to herself, did at about the age of nine see she must learn, and, though she never became a bookworm, acquired reading for practical purposes.

Yet even a description of such a normal class as this for children from six will lead anyone who has been in a good average infant school or kindergarten to say, 'How different from reality!' In the class for the six-year-olds, and, alas! sometimes for the five-year-olds, he will find much more group work than is suggested here, far more set lessons, a far more rigorous time-table. Four facts explain the state of affairs: (a) The average teacher was brought up under the dominance of class work and perhaps unconsciously tends to rely too much on it. (b) Her life is so full and so tiring that she uses a time-table to save the time and energy necessary

for shaping the work to the growing needs of the child, as the mother or governess would do. (c) The classes in infants' schools are so large and the pressure put on the teachers to get the children on is so insistent that only very few are able to resist it and let the children develop at their own rate. (d) The circle is vicious; while classes are so large even the most skilled and earnest believer in individual work cannot adapt her methods to satisfy the needs of each individual child; and until teachers have had experience of the happy progress made by children between five and seven who are allowed to work at their own rate, they never will realize how excellent the results are, how effortless the work.

So much for the large school. In the good small preparatory the work would approximate far more closely to that described in this section. Yet it is not uncommon even for kindergarten teachers to use class teaching unduly and to push children into formal work in reading, writing and number. Probably such teachers have not sufficient faith to resist ambitious parents who want visible proofs of their children's progress.

*b. The Middle and Last Years.*

Still in the primary school and still far from the top of it, the average child of seven, now at any rate some little way on towards the acquisition of the elements of the Three R's, is ready to approach a further differentiation of the curriculum into work and play, and in work to apply himself to improving his skill and knowledge in various activities—reading, writing, number work, drawing and handwork. His work must still run parallel to the widening out of his interests, but it is probable that he has collected sufficient experience for some such curriculum as was suggested in Chapter IX.

But whether he breathe the free air of the school with the simpler curriculum or not, he is undoubtedly ready for more formal work, and the 'practice' lesson should play a greater part in his life. It can never be said too often that he should realize the need for this formal work and that once having realized it everything in the school—the staff's attitude towards work—the standards of the older boys and girls should make it the normal thing to do his best to overcome

difficulties. And whether the curriculum should be so suited to his tastes that he grows naturally in knowledge and experience, or whether it be divorced from his real life, every effort must be made to help him to acquire a growing power of concentration.

Students in training must get weary of the reiteration of the doctrine of interest, and yet again it must be asserted that the justification of the less formal curriculum which was suggested in Chapter IX is that it follows the child's growing interests and so makes for concentrated effort.

Between the years of seven and eleven a child is stable in health and mentally happy, and hence has much free energy to be expended in acquiring knowledge of his environment, and as he exhausts that, in his first enthusiastic, happy, and somewhat hasty search for experience, he will turn his attention to worlds distant both in time and place. But just as novel reading does not satisfy the growing adolescent—and the first discoveries of a child should be as exciting as any story—so the child needs to feel that he is working hard and acquiring both learning and skill.

Thus his maps and plans should be more precise, his heroes will live in given centuries rather than in 'long ago', his knowledge of his own neighbourhood should become more full and accurate and he should almost know by heart the books which he has found most helpful in widening his experience of other people and other lands. Too few books, pictures, maps, excursions, make for unnecessary limitations to natural curiosity and so make for the dull boy. But there is no need to go to the other extreme and supply unlimited interesting books and many kinds of craft to attract the child's attention.

In a good school there should not be an antithesis between interesting work and hard work, and by the time he leaves the junior school a child should have learnt to work hard and with concentration, to do his best before he asks for help, to make sure that he knows a piece of work or understands a problem before he accounts it done, to make every effort to keep his work as tidy, his writing as legible, his spelling and arithmetic as accurate, his speech as intelligible as effort will make them. That he should know rather more or less

Arithmetic, Geography or Literature than some other boy of his age does not seem to matter; at the best, the actual information acquired by eleven is a matter of small importance. What does matter enormously is that (1) he should like school and want to work; (2) he has acquired standards of careful and neat work; (3) he has improved his powers of taking pains; (4) he has found that at any rate some books are a treasure-house of interest; (5) he goes into the upper school feeling that work is interesting and that he wants to do his best.

If we could get such children for the senior schools most of us would care very little about the gaps in their knowledge. And we should not have so many children making such criticisms on the barrenness of formal work as did the little girl who said she disliked school because 'it so interferes with my work'—she was spending all her time out of school furnishing a doll's house—or the little boy who said, 'You do not go to school to learn, but to wait while other people learn'.

### 3. SOME PROBLEMS OF THE MODERN SECONDARY SCHOOL

If the child of eleven goes to a school where he will as a matter of course take the School-Leaving Certificate that qualifies for entrance to a university, his path is mapped out for him, though even then he should have two more years of freedom before shades of public examinations darken his way. But already at eleven there must be a differentiation of curriculum, for though all children would, in the writer's opinion, gain enormously by having a common education until the age of eleven, somewhere about that time differentiation of curriculum is necessary. Those children, for example, who will be at school until they are sixteen and then proceed to some professional training, should begin a second language; whereas those children who will leave school between fifteen and sixteen must have far more time to stabilize what knowledge they have obtained and to acquire those artistic and intellectual interests that will give them satisfactory ways of employing their leisure.

Hence, as soon as a consideration is undertaken of the secondary school, the question arises as to what the majority

of the scholars are likely to do when they leave. The work should be that which is best for this majority and no desire to get successes in the matriculation examination or scholarships for the brilliant pupil should be allowed to make the work unsuitable for the average boy or girl. If there is always due consideration given to individual differences in ability and speed in learning, due encouragement of initiative and much individual work, the slow boy need not get confused and waste time because a subject is incomprehensible to him, and the clever academically inclined lad can go ahead at his own pace, matriculate when he is ready and win honours for his school.

Hence, though it is impossible in a book of this scope to discuss all the reforms long overdue in the education of the average boy or girl in the secondary school, certain conditions of good work at once become apparent, no matter to what type of school a child goes at the age of eleven.

It is hoped that some brief notes on the following topics will give rise to thought and discussion and prepare the student for the thorough consideration of the difficulties of secondary education that await him in the future.

1. *Classification of Pupils.* According to the Education Act of every child at eleven should leave the primary school and take some form of secondary education until he is at least sixteen. The type of school he joins will for many years depend on how he acquits himself in a qualifying test, but his ability and probable future will, as far as possible, determine which of the following schools he enters :

The Grammar School, a generic term for all secondary schools preparing for entrance to a university. The pupils must stay till sixteen and should remain until eighteen.

The Technical High School, providing a five years' course up to sixteen. The curriculum should be similar to that of other secondary schools for the first two years ; after that the aim should be ' to provide a liberal education with science as the core and inspiration '.

The Modern Secondary School. A re-classification can be made of children attending any of these schools at the age of thirteen.

2. *Pupil's Capacity.* The work must be so diversified that it will seem worth while for each child to do his best to continue his education. This point must be emphasized, for so many children seem to take delight in learning until they get into their early teens, and then to question continually the value of Mathematics, French, Music, Needlework, History, etc.

Thus, in a school that is preparing for the University, the very fact that the boy must pass a Mathematics examination at sixteen will incite him, if he really wants University life, to work. But if a girl knows she is leaving school at fifteen and will then train for a children's nurse, unless, for example, Arithmetic is kept clearly in line with her work in handicrafts and housewifery, she can easily and happily acquire a careless indifference. Now, such an attitude is bad enough in itself, but unfortunately, once a naturally happy-go-lucky girl realizes that she need not take pains over subjects in which she can see no use, she learns a lesson very hard to unlearn. In other words, she learns to slack, and it may be that she thus acquires an attitude towards work that she may find it very hard to break. It is not true to say 'once a slacker, always a slacker', but it is true to assert that if a child comes up from a junior school full of enthusiasm for work and finds in the senior school a curriculum suited for the literary child and entirely unsuited to him, he loses heart and takes up with other interests—very possibly games—that satisfy his need for activity and successful achievement.

3. *Mental and Physical Instability.* The boy and girl between eleven and sixteen are not stable in mind or body; at times their physical growth is so rapid that mental growth seems almost at a standstill; at times all their energy is deflected into one channel, say certain sides of school work, with the result that the kindly helpful child of eleven disappears and his place for the time being is taken by some one who only wants to get on with his own work, who resents family calls on his time, and is generally difficult and selfish; in other cases emotional life develops with great rapidity and both school and home life that take away chances of being

with the self-chosen friends are looked on as a nuisance and a bore.

These changes are happening to all children, and no matter how important examinations are, the work of the school should allow for it. Individual work and such an elastic classification that the pupil may easily join the group of workers for which he is suited is the most obvious way of allowing for the speeding-up and slowing-down of intellectual growth at this period. A very varied school life with many opportunities for dramatic work and concerts, arts and crafts exhibitions and games of all kinds will lure some children from their self-absorption or intellectual lethargy. And a school tone that makes it seem natural to help others cheerfully and never to play for one's own hand, even in examination work, should help the unduly ambitious child.

4. *Specialist Teaching.* In the primary school, except for Arts and Crafts and Music, and perhaps games, the less specialization the better. The child will have more chances of having connected knowledge if the same teacher has dealt with his English and introduced him to the human and physical world in which he lives. Composition, for example, will have more chance of being a means of recording information that he wants to keep, or impressions he wishes to express, if the woman who teaches him to look at birds also teaches him to improve his verse-writing. But by eleven he has the foundations of English, History, Geography, and Nature Study; he has had some all-round training in the use of various materials, and it is hoped, some teaching in one or two crafts. Now his need is for more 'technique' in arts and in the various branches of knowledge, and that guidance and inspiration which, as a rule, the specialist gives better than anyone. In other words, History, Geography, Botany, Biology at about this time should emerge from the general preparatory course, and if the work in the lower school has been well done the child is ready for more specialized work. The very preparation of History, Geography and Botany for a class of children of eleven plus is too much for the average teacher, who as a result finds he can only get his lessons from the nearest textbook.



In the secondary school this principle has always been accepted, but it is stressed here partly to remind readers of the facts of development of children, partly to urge that it is as essential to specialize in the modern secondary school as in the best grammar school; perhaps indeed more, for the children are less prone to intellectual interests, and so more in need of stimulus. But even then the specialist must learn to work in co-operation with the class teacher, and he should be a teacher first, a specialist second. Thus, Arts and Crafts must not be divorced, and craft must be closely connected with the practical needs of the community. Yet one does find schools in which a teacher is doing cardboard or leather work as a craft, and though an art specialist is teaching design, the children in their leather work are using horrible patterns copied from a paper. This is perhaps a crude example, but its very crudity shows the pitfalls of those who specialize too narrowly.

#### 4. SPECIALIZATION IN A SMALL SCHOOL

It has been suggested that the well-educated, artistic girl who has had a thoroughly good course at a training college for the teaching of younger children will give a class greater pleasure in their drawing and handwork, their history and geography, than many a specialist with far greater skill and knowledge. She does not smother the burning flax and she has a very quick eye for signs of burning in unexpected places. But when a child is ten or eleven he is in need of more technical training than the good all-round teacher can give him. As his interests are, probably, still on the active rather than on the intellectual side, it is wise for specialization to take place in these subjects first. It is with no disrespect to teachers of History and Geography that this statement is made. An educated teacher, at a pinch, can keep even a keen child from eleven to fifteen busily and progressively employed in such subjects when he would be wasting the child's time in music, dramatic work, arts and crafts.

Now music, dramatic work, arts and crafts are undoubtedly the child's first approach to secondary interests, and hence, if the staff is small, it must be chosen with this point in view,

and the time-table must show a recognition of this fact, both in allowing much time for such subjects and allowing those people to take them who teach them best. At the cost of being tedious this point must be stressed. In many elementary schools it is still looked upon as a special right of a 'head assistant' to teach the top class, and any attempt to reorganize the work is met with opposition. Yet, in the top class, of all classes the children should be receiving fresh inspiration from new personalities who have the special skill that is desired. It is not at all unlikely that the specialist is young, is less skilful in handling a class than the well-established teacher, but he has much help to give, and a test of the value of the class teacher's work will be found in how the class takes what other people can offer.

The smaller the school the more necessary is it that some one keen on arts and crafts shall be a member of the staff. In the smallest schools of all, staffed by one teacher and an untrained helper, the teacher must mother her whole school and, like a mother, hand on to them as many of her enthusiasms, interests and hobbies as they will take.

## CHAPTER XII

### SOME PROBLEMS OF THE MODERN SECONDARY SCHOOL

#### I. THE TYPE OF SCHOOL UNDER CONSIDERATION

**T**HERE are problems connected with the teaching of the various school subjects that it is wise for the reader to consider before he, too, perhaps becomes the excellent specialist teacher. Hence this chapter contains a few brief notes on the teaching of some special subjects—notes, be it said, of an interested onlooker who may perhaps see some aspects that the teacher engrossed in the literature of his own subject misses.

With the preparation of the intellectual boy or girl for

university life, however, this chapter does not deal. It seems probable that even the exceptional child would do better if he did not receive any special training for scholarships, etc., but that is too large a question, too closely related to a young teacher's personal experience to be discussed in a book of this type. This section will deal with the teaching of special subjects to the average boy and girl who began life in the primary school and went at eleven to the modern secondary or technical or grammar school, from which he matriculated and possibly also did a couple of years' work in an Advanced Course. But then he would leave school perhaps to take up business work or to go to some technical college; but not for his main occupation would he have the acquisition of further scientific or literary qualifications.

Thus when he leaves school at sixteen or eighteen, as the case may be, he must have sufficient enthusiasm and skill to continue his own training in Mathematics, Geography, History, Literature, if such subjects are to be continued. Or, assuming his specific education ends with school, as is most often the case, he should leave with the knowledge necessary for an educated man in a modern community. What that knowledge should be is for each specialist to decide; the non-specialist teacher must be content with watching the results of the work of the expert.

## 2. SUITABLE COURSES IN ARTS AND CRAFTS

In the section on Arts and Crafts on p. 123 the need was discussed for the close correlation of drawing and handicrafts on the one hand, and for handicrafts as an impetus to the acquisition of knowledge on the other.

In the senior school, where interest will only develop if the pupils can be given expert help in the acquisition of technique, the need for specialist teachers is obvious. Yet perhaps more than ever it is essential that the teacher should be a teacher first, a craftsman second, for the aim is not to produce expert dressmakers, carpenters, etc., but to give such interest in manual work as only experience can give, and to add fullness of content to the leisure hours of the average citizen. But it is so important that the work done in schools

during the last few years should be continued afterwards that here, at last, we are forced to let the future work of the pupils and their most likely environment<sup>1</sup> react directly on the curriculum, syllabus, and time devoted to various subjects, and on the choice of the arts and crafts in which there shall be specialist teachers. Hence too, as undoubtedly the average girl leaving school at sixteen or even eighteen must spend the greater part of her life in various kinds of home craft while the boy will earn his living outside the home, it seems that even in a mixed school there must be marked divergence of curriculum between that of girls from fourteen to sixteen and of boys of the same age.

This is too large a subject to be fully considered here, but the reader can do worse than accustom himself to considering the problem in the more concrete form of a suitable Arts and Crafts course for boys and girls respectively.

Taking Arts and Crafts in the broadest and least technical sense, the following school activities can be placed under this heading :

(a) *Arts of common interest to boys and girls.*

Music.

Literature.<sup>1</sup>

Drawing and Colour Work. Modelling and Pottery. Games.

(b) *Arts of more direct interest to boys.*

Certain branches of carpentry.

Practical application of the pure sciences—' wireless  
*par excellence*.

Lithography and etching.

The care of machinery, e.g. a sewing machine, a bicycle, a motor-bicycle, a car.

The necessary art of plumbing.

(c) *Arts of more direct interest to girls.*

The application of design and colour in one such craft as dressmaking, weaving, house-decoration.

<sup>1</sup> See Teaching of English, p. 163.

Home management : cleaning, washing, cooking and preserving ; the making of furnishings and the renovations thereof.

The care of children.

In no sense is the classification meant to be exhaustive or final, and to the most casual critic it will be apparent it is a cross classification. Music, Literature, and Games need separate consideration ; Pictorial Art appears as an art of common interest to boys and girls and divorced from craft work. Yet throughout the book the divorce has been deprecated. But for the purpose of this section it had here to be separated, for it is obvious that a mixed sketching class or, again, modelling, could be a very helpful and delightful experience to both boys and girls. Also, if a boys' school specialized in one or more of the arts suggested in (b) the artistic boy might miss great inspiration if he had not some hours devoted to 'unapplied art'.

The truth is that drawing and colour are fundamental to all crafts, and the good teacher sees that they are kept closely in touch with the pupils' school and home interests.

Again, the pronounced feminist will take umbrage at the suggestion that knowledge of cars and plumbing are considered to be boys' work. Were time in school longer, such restrictions need not be, and it is undoubtedly a deprivation for the boy that he is not taught cooking and needlework, for the girl, that she does not learn the physiology of a car. Perhaps indeed in the good school of ten years hence, when more experience is forthcoming as to the best curriculum for the adolescent, this distinction will disappear ; but in the meantime when the time for Art and Craft work is distressingly meagre, it is safer to work along lines that on the whole represent the interests of average boys and girls and their opportunities for developing them when they leave school. It is hoped that the following brief notes on the teaching of some of the subjects suggested by the classification will at least give food for thought.

*(a) Arts of Common Interest to Boys and Girls**I. Music.*

By the time the secondary school is reached, certainly if a specialist has taught music in the primary school, children are used to reading and singing fairly simple tunes, let us hope in both notations, certainly enjoy school singing, and should have a store of accurately memorized folk-songs. They will also recognize easily simple examples of musical time and rhythm, and probably be able to step easy rhythms and to phrase intelligently. In the secondary school, especially in boys' schools, how much can be done depends almost entirely on the teacher. An enthusiastic specialist will be tempted to over-emphasize the theory unless he can organize an orchestra, for many boys must stop singing, and the musical girl so often needs all the time she can spare for individual work at violin, 'cello or piano.

Choral singing for all who can, part songs, the school choir, the orchestra, rhythmic work, are all part of the music teaching in the secondary school. But the growing point in musical work is the realization that most of the scholars should, when they leave school, form the concert and opera goers of the community, and that any work that makes for better, more constant, more critical audiences is all to the good. Hence, as much time as possible should be given to training people to listen intelligently and appreciatively. How such work is done is undoubtedly as much the province of the specialist as how history or mathematics should be taught. But in these days of broadcasting and gramophones the work should take a large share of the time allotted to music, and the teaching of theory should have as its aim to deepen appreciation. Hence the value of eurhythmics; children learn by doing and must hear and understand in order to do. There is something so delightful in community singing that it will always find a place in school life, and the exceptionally good singer is generally found and even perhaps used more than is good for him. But every child should occasionally sing aloud to a class, just as he should read to a class, because only by the assumption that it is quite natural for every one to do so does

the choral singing become expressive and the good soloist avoid self-consciousness.

There is perhaps more nonsense written and talked about music than any art ; ordinary amateurs maintain they can distinguish A's technique from B's, discriminate between one orchestra and another, not perhaps untruthfully but because they are never forced to test the truth of their statements. The fact is that the majority of us don't know what perceptive and intelligent listening really means, and it is this art that must be introduced into the schools. Hence the value of the gramophone when one can listen to a quartet till one knows and hears the violin, the second violin, the viola and 'cello taking up and embroidering a theme. This power, by most of us only gained by absorbed and constant practice, will heighten joy more in proportion to the time spent on it than in any other art. And it is far easier and can go much further if begun early.

## 2. *Drawing and Colour Work.*

In Geography, History, Natural Science, Dramatic work, and all crafts, drawing and colour work are used as a means to an end, and just as every teacher is a teacher of English so should nearly every one be a teacher of drawing. Moreover, the comparison with English holds good for a further stage, since here, too, there is work which is the definite function of the specialist.

(a) The art of water-colour painting seems to have a special appeal to English people, and the standard of work is very high. More than once has the present writer, in out-of-the-way parts of the Continent, met the assumption that if A is English, he sketches, and it is interesting to note how often the amateur that one meets armed with easel and paint-box or notebook and pen and pencil is English.

In families and schools where it is taken for granted that sketching is an absorbing occupation in which most people delight, it is surprising how much time children will voluntarily devote to it and how fresh and interesting are their results. During their life in the junior school the greater part of their work should be experimental ; they try and fail, and then ask

the specialist for help. But if between eleven and fifteen there is not a fair chance given to the interested pupil of acquiring technique from one who knows how to give it and how to help him to a better result, he loses heart and learns to despise his childish efforts. Drawing is a subject which specially lends itself to individual work, and consequently, though the problems such as the effect of light or distance on colour, the fundamental principles of perspective, etc., make excellent material for the class lesson, the application of the principles should be to almost as many subjects as there are pupils. If possible, all should try their hands at sketching out of doors; but in addition, some may be making a book of flowers or birds or trees, others acquiring the art of figure-drawing and book illustration; some few will always hanker for black-and-white work, and they, as soon as possible, should be transferred to a wood-engraving or etching class.

The great thing is that there should be 'joy in the making', and no desire to get a very high standard of results should be allowed to change the work from a pleasure into a compulsory task. But at any rate in the top classes of schools where there has been no help from specialists, the reverse process has taken place; the pupils have lost interest in art work because there was no one sufficiently good to give them the improved technique for which they realized their need.

(b) As in music the aim of the specialist is to encourage enthusiastic and intelligent concert-goers, so in the art lesson the lover of pictures as well as the amateur painter must be made. What is written on p. 165 concerning the literature lesson suggests the theory underlying this branch of teaching. The specialist must show and talk about pictures, as the literature teacher reads and discusses texts, but the examples chosen must be such that the class can enjoy them and learn to see further beauty in them—they should look at the picture with pleasure, and the art of the teacher lies in getting them to look at it more attentively and appreciatively. Sometimes the lesson is a result of the work of the class—the better drawn tree, Dürer's grasses after a day's sketching in June, or a perfect English landscape. Very often the lesson follows one



in which the class has been trying to acquire some piece of technical skill—the obvious illustration that occurs to every one is to show examples of early representation of distance and foreshortening. Certainly during the last year of school a history of some branch of art taken closely in connection with the children's own work is an enormous help to the lover of pictures.

(c) Finally, all students of art, no matter their age, do enjoy greatly seeing their work exhibited for others to see, and, almost as much, seeing others' work. Any one who has worked in a school or college where a 'studio exhibition' was a weekly event will have realized the joy of the student whose work has been chosen, the delight in a friend's work, and as a result the heightened power of criticism. Every school should try to organize at least once a year a 'School Academicians' Exhibition,' with the children as a 'hanging committee' and the specialist as the final awarder of red discs corresponding to those which indicate 'sold' in a real exhibition. The work that all the scholars give to the pictures they are sending in, the training that the hanging committee get in discrimination, the excitement and joy on the afternoon when everybody visits the exhibition amply repays the time and effort of the staff. And such exhibitions of arts, of crafts, of games, make the school a place that the children love and remember. Such exhibitions have in addition two advantages:

(1) They add to the parents' pleasure and interest in the school work, for certainly the day of the School Academicians' Exhibition should be an Open Day.

(2) They suggest to children the delight that can be gained from looking at pictures. After their own exhibition there should be a visit to the nearest art gallery, and there the children should roam at will and again select the pictures they would star. Such visits should be arranged in all towns which have galleries and exhibitions of modern work, and this especially is true of London, which surely possesses one of the most wonderful galleries of the world. The more that is done in schools to encourage careful and intelligent looking at pictures, the more people there will be who have a pleasure that will last as long as eyes can see.

- Helping to hear better, to look more carefully—surely work worthy of Music and Art teachers.

### 3. *Games.*

In an English school games are always an integral part of physical training ; it should be the games master or mistress who takes the necessary theory underlying healthy living, who arranges for remedial work, and gives the more formal training in the gymnasium. It is hoped that in the new secondary schools, now to be rapidly opened for boys and girls from eleven to sixteen, there will be one teacher at least who finds his greatest interest in this side of the work and who has received special training for it.

But in many secondary schools, for some time to come, the non-specialist will have to take part in the supervision of games and even the physical training, and it may be wise to consider the part that games and physical training play in the life of a boy or girl in early adolescence.

(1). Children enjoy physical exercise and games not because, as in the Board's syllabus, those are chosen that will aid towards a well-grown body, but because active play is a natural tendency in young people and the need for movement makes the time spent in the gymnasium and in the playground pleasing. If there is an undue proportion of formal training, or if the teacher himself is bored by this side of the work, the class loses interest in it, and without interest the movements become slack and almost valueless.

Here, if anywhere, it is better to have five minutes of concentrated effort than ten minutes of slack work.

(2) Because interested work has more beneficial results than formal exercises, the Ministry of Education set the example of getting as much done as possible by means of games ; it is, for instance, more exciting to throw a bag of beans over one's head in such a way that the boy behind can catch it than to do a formal arm exercise ; and when four teams in a class are bag-throwing, each wishing to have completed the game first, it is very interesting to see what skill and care develop.

Such team games can be played by a whole class, either in

a gymnasium, hall or preferably, of course, in a playground, and should be a daily part of the school life. The more crowded the district from which the pupils come, the smaller their homes, the greater the need for daily exercise and play out of doors, yet it is often the poorest schools that have the most hopelessly inadequate arrangements for physical training and games. Surely, if the specialist is needed anywhere it is in a school where a large proportion of the children need attention to health.<sup>1</sup>

(3) There is, in addition to the team game in which all can share, that at which only a few can play at a time, net-ball, football, cricket, tennis, etc. In most schools, if all the pupils are given a chance of sharing in such games, no one set of children can excel, and yet to compete for the shield or cup in inter-school contests is of great interest to the school as well as the players. Hence generally a compromise is effected by coaching likely children after school hours. What is really needed is more space for games, more time and special facilities for practice, and matches on the school holiday. The importance of playing-fields for all children, be they rich or poor, is obvious, and has been allowed for in the Education Act of 1944.

(4) Eagerness to win looks after itself, and it is a pity to encourage competition. Given four teams of healthy children, each team will want to win. The system of giving 'points' that is used in many schools should be considered very carefully, and then only used by people who are fully aware of the dangers inherent therein. In schools where the children have not been trained to 'play the game' the value of scoring a point becomes higher than that of playing well and honourably. Especially is this likely to happen in the game conducted by the inexperienced teacher who cannot give the impression of being in all places at once and seeing everything. His only hope is to prepare his lesson most carefully before and, organize to the last detail and put all his influence on the side of good work. Children only grow to ideals of fairness and honesty slowly, and even in a senior school it is still necessary to encourage

<sup>1</sup> A teacher summed up the matter of games for children from poor homes by saying, 'As many as possible with as little as possible said to the ratepayers.'

the practice of honesty in games and work and discourage any method that tempts the weaker children to stray from the difficult and narrow path of personal rectitude in life.

(5) There is a type of child, more common among girls than boys, who actively dislikes competitive games. Her nervousness and distaste for the process can make her miss the simplest catch, and if competition runs high make her a *persona ingrata* to any team. Now she won't learn to like games any the better by their being compulsory, and if she has reached the upper part of school and still dislikes them she should be let off as much as possible. She must most probably do the daily ten minutes of class exercise and games, but apart from that any pressure to make her play, any school tone that accounts those who don't like games as 'muffs' is seriously to be deprecated. Love of games, like love of water-colours, seems a British characteristic, but we are so mixed in race that a certain number of people are not British in that respect. Indeed, continental people have not our love of sport, and it seems a pity to encourage boys and girls to indict a whole continent. If a boy has an out-of-door hobby he is far less in need of games. And even if children loaf about it is no good forcing them into games. That is no cure, but only the easiest way a harassed teacher finds for assuring himself all his charges are out of mischief.

The normal child likes playing with his fellows; the abnormal child loafs instead of playing. The cause should be discovered—by a psychologist or doctor if necessary.

*(b) and (c) Arts and Crafts of more Direct Interest either to Boys or Girls*

Here a writer of a book of this sort has again to urge that more unconventional curricula, less consideration for the small minority who will continue formal education when they leave school, and a greater latitude as to what may be taught with advantage would be of great value in organizing this side of the work.

The staff is of great importance, for unless amongst its members there is a wireless enthusiast or a devout etcher, there is not much to be gained by letting boys give up school-

time to such work.<sup>1</sup> The great need of the child in the senior school is to be able to get expert help in that art to which he feels drawn. If the school cannot supply such aid, the probability is that help 'got up' and given by the hard-working but uninterested teacher is not worth the time it takes.

It is better in such a case to say help is not forthcoming ; often the boys do better if they feel they are teaching themselves, and they greatly relish the idea that here at least they can do more than those who teach them.

*'Home' Craft.* But if this section has become a plea for a revised curriculum with much more time for games and arts and divers crafts in the boys' secondary school, the plea is even more earnest when consideration is given to the work of the average secondary school for girls. The gulf between what a girl does at school between the ages of fourteen and sixteen and what she does when she leaves is even wider than in the case of a boy. And yet as the majority of the girls are going to work in the home or in some branch of domestic work their native interests in clothes, in music, dancing, colour, and craft-work could be raised and sustained with no sacrifice of a liberal education.

Colour and design should, for example, be applied to the furnishing of class-rooms and homes, and visits to shops such as Heal's and Liberty's should become a part of the course, as visits to galleries become part of the Art course. The needlework lesson should cease to be a subject apart and should become a time in which the girls learn to make the kind of clothes that the well-dressed child or girl of the time wears. Just as in literature it is no good using texts far above the intellectual level of the class, so in dressmaking lessons it is no good denouncing modern fashions and insisting on such perfection in sewing or such type of clothes that the girls realize the divergence between the taste and standards of school and home.

The teacher can only make the best of modern conditions and try to encourage the girl to adapt them to her own state

<sup>1</sup> Even this statement is not strictly accurate, for in a school where much individual work is encouraged, an elder boy has organized a wireless club, and the physics master says this work is most valuable.

of health and type of beauty. Thus it is better to encourage weaving on scarves than on dress material, for the modern girl does not want a dress that lasts for ever.

Again, if a girl is in a class where good machining has its place, she is far more likely to try to improve her hand-sewing when she realizes that under certain conditions it is necessary, and fine sewing should be an art especially encouraged in the secondary school. In the primary school, most of the work will be 'stitchery' in bright-coloured threads.

What is true about clothes is equally true of a girl's other interests, and the course on home-making should give sufficient scope for design, arrangement, house-cleaning; the course on child-care an excellent reason for revising the theory underlying the elementary work on literature and number and games, for teaching hygiene and the main facts of child psychology that no man or woman should be without, though the moment for men to learn comes later. Again the enthusiastic reformer must go slowly. It is not wise, for example, to make scathing criticisms on houses filled with unnecessary ornaments when the homes of the girls are still possibly greatly overcrowded. A girl rightly resents criticism on her home, and it is only by constant observation of the care taken in keeping the class-room tidy, harmonious, and free from unnecessary things, by constant discussion of the mutual effects of colours and the conditions of pleasing pattern and arrangement that a new taste is developed. More perhaps than even specialists realize, it is worth while to have the class-rooms as beautiful as care will make and keep them, and the staff rooms something more pleasing than receptacles for notices and books to be corrected, hats, and tea-things.

Clearly, such a course will take a fair share of the time during the last year of school, but the girl who is more keen in certain other branches of school work, say, music and painting, will be expected to give less time to it than the girl who puts less effort and interest into ordinary school subjects.

It is a pity if it has to be made a compulsory class. The attitude should not be 'You are not taking Matric. and are a girl, therefore you must do Homecraft,' but 'As you are only doing the qualifying and will be more free from lessons

shortly, is there any part of this course that will be useful to you?'. Nearly all such girls would, I think, begin with the art of dressing, and go on to the art of house decoration.

Finally, throughout, the course should be as practical as possible. Discussions of illustrated catalogues should play a part as well as all that is possible in the way of choosing furniture, designing papers, carpets, etc. Cookery and housewifery always are taught practically and thoroughly enjoyed by most of the elder girls. As they leave by sixteen and often earn their living outside the home, they unfortunately often forget all they have learnt before they need to use it. But if these subjects could be put off until later and then given as much respect as Mathematics and Latin, many girls would find home life more full of interest and possibilities than they do at present.

It seems almost unnecessary to urge that those girls who take a course on the care of children should have as many chances as possible of helping in a good nursery school, crèche, or babies' room in an infant department or kindergarten.

### 3. NOTES ON THE TEACHING OF SPECIAL SUBJECTS

#### I. *English.*

In the school for children under eleven where specialization is kept for such subjects as Arts and Crafts and Music, an obvious simplification of the curriculum would be to consider Geography and History as part of the English course, for those lessons in which the pupil learns how to gain information from books are obviously as real a part of English as of History and Geography teaching. In the senior school the converse is true in so far that undoubtedly the teacher of History or Geography is not teaching as he should if he does not

- (a) give the training in reading for information,
- (b) give a training in speaking and writing clearly and concisely on the subject-matter with which he is dealing.

In this sense, as the Departmental Committee on the Teaching of English pointed out, every teacher should con-

sider himself a teacher of English, and it is wise to emphasize that, for the average citizen, it is even more important to be able to speak clearly and precisely on a subject and to discuss various points of view with good humour than to be able to write. Hence it seems as if one of the greatest reforms needed in most schools is a greater insistence on oral work, short lectures, debates, group work leading to discussions, class discussion. A silent listening class will never learn the art of discussion.

This essential part of language training is common to all class work, and it is obvious that a syllabus in any subject that necessitates the covering of so much ground that this training is impossible, is bad. The result of such an overloading of material is that the teacher is almost forced to impart too much information while the class thinks too little and memorizes too much.

English syllabuses are not free from this snare, and the results are even more dire than in History and Geography, for under such conditions the pupils nearly always read about books instead of reading books themselves. Now books are of course only a means of extending experience ; but the first-hand experience any man can get is so limited that in a civilized community where the actual process of keeping alive does not take the entire day, every man has free energy and time for such second-hand experiences as he can get from watching football or racing, plays or cinemas, or reading for pleasure or information. When he has read a great many books he may have such an interest in criticism that he will want to read what other people think about books, even indeed about those he has not read, but in the early days of reading it is surely wise to limit him to criticisms on those he has read. When a class of girls and boys have discussed Macbeth's character, then they might read Bradley's view, but if they read it earlier, Bradley will suggest to them what to think instead of helping them how to think. This, then, seems to be the first essential of good English teaching—that it should introduce children to the study of good books and help them to enjoy and to think about them ; such an attitude will lead to discussion amongst young people, who



naturally talk on the subjects that interest them. Obvious as this aim is, it is curious how often it is neglected, for though teachers may say, 'Do you like the book?' they say it and pass on to giving a lesson of which the aim is obviously instructive, a lesson which often ends by children making notes and writing an essay.

What was written in Chapter I on the Appreciation Lesson applies equally here. Just as it would spoil a concert for most people if they knew they must write a criticism of it, so too it spoils a book to write answers to questions thereon. Hence the enormous value of good talk; most people do want to talk about their interests and do learn a great deal from discussion.

Perhaps it is not amiss to make some suggestions to the beginner on the conduct of such discussion, which only begins naturally in a natural class, i.e. a class that during all its school days has been accustomed to taking an active share in the talk of the room. But however formal and disciplined a school in which the teacher of English finds himself, he must try for the free atmosphere of honest give and take in his literature class. Hence, (a) he must consider no opinion as reprehensible, (b) he must be as honest with the class as he expects them to be with him, (c) he must try to ask the kind of question, give the type of judgment that encourages rather than ends a discussion. Thus the judgment *ex cathedra* is as a general rule entirely out of place—as it is in good talk. If a man says to his friend, 'You know nothing about it, so it's no good asking you,' it's ten to one the friend will stop the discussion and acquire a feeling of resentment. If a teacher says to a class, 'The *Jungle Book* is far better than *Tarzan of the Apes*,' the child who is at the stage of reading and re-reading *Tarzan* says to himself, 'That's what he thinks,' and drops out of the discussion. Nor is it much good saying, 'Why do you like *Tarzan* better than the *Jungle Book*?' for the boy who does so is probably at the stage of enjoying easily conveyed excitement, and is not inclined to be critical. All that can be done in such a case—and there are thousands of them—is to be a teacher first, a lover of good books second; in other words, to be so obviously interested in the child's

point of view that he will talk freely. By learning what really moves him in *Tarzan* the teacher will get help for his future work on the *Jungle Book*. Thus the teacher must free himself from the accepted adult standards, and be willing to learn what immature people like. We do not complain because a boy prefers condensed milk and strawberry jam to mushrooms on toast, and yet we assume he must prefer a Shakespeare play to *The Ghost Train*. The art of teaching lies in helping him to transfer his affection to Shakespeare, and the modern theatre-goer shows how little teachers have practised the art. Those teachers who have been most successful seem to have had a knowledge of Shakespeare's technique and great sympathy for children; they have realized the desire of boys and girls to act, to act in their own way and to manage their own affairs. If a class wants to give a dramatic performance and to have a boy stage-manager, they soon find how much more help Shakespeare gives than many a modern playwright. But such work is not suitable for children under fourteen; up to then they should get practice adapting stories they enjoy or acting such plays as those given at the Children's Theatre in Endell Street. The average boy and girl do not act Shakespeare 'for fun' before the age of fourteen, and Shakespeare should be acted 'for fun'.

The more active a class is allowed to be in their choice of books, rate of reading, and expression of opinion, the more rapidly will they grow away from childish gods and find the great and permanent possessions. Hence the second suggestion for better English teaching is a very large school library and much freedom of choice.

If sufficient time is left for quiet reading and for dramatic work there will be fewer of those 'set book' lessons in which most readers of this book 'did' a series of texts beginning with the *Lady of the Lake* and passing by way of *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* to a Shakespeare play. In another 'type of syllabus, History of Literature was the main object of the course, and at the best the students read a prose and verse anthology.

Time should be allowed for the study of a set book, and even, during the last year of school, for a survey of English

Literature, but it is wiser to use it for a careful consideration of texts more in accordance with the age and experience of the children. The study of a text in class takes the place of the book that is read aloud to the child at home. Now such a book can always be more difficult than that the child would read for himself, and in school the set literature lesson should be the growing point in literary appreciation. Here the child learns to read more carefully, to weigh the meaning and sound of words, to appreciate balance and rhythm. The exercises that he works are on such points, and his prose and verse-making arise from his study of literature. Often the text should set him reading further afield, either other works of the same author or other books of the same type. Thus, *Robinson Crusoe* may lead a boy to *Captain Singleton*, to *Treasure Island*, or to books of travel; the *Lady of the Lake* to a steady reading of all Scott's verse, and then perhaps his novels, or to *Border Ballads*. The great function of the lesson, then, seems to be the opening of doors that the ordinary pupil would not easily open for himself, and giving him help in acquiring sensitiveness to beautiful sounds and nice use of language.

Now to do this work the lesson must not deal with texts far beyond the child's range of reading, and hence the suggestion to the teacher, who wishes his boys to leave school already interested in English classics, is that he is not too ambitious in his choice of texts. An un-literary girl of fourteen became much interested in *Wives and Daughters* that was read aloud to her, and afterwards read *North and South* for herself. This was the first long 'grown-up' tale, as she called it, she had read willingly, and she now is reading *The Mill on the Floss*. In her somewhat formal school she is taking a selection of *The Coverley Papers* and Gray's *Elegy*. So far no encouragement at home has induced her to proceed to further researches along either of these lines.

The snare of the specialist, and one sees it again and again, is that he thinks the boy brings a specialist's interest to the task. He does not; and the chances are that he will not develop the average educated man's interest in literature or biography, history or travel unless he is introduced to them.

either at home or at school, in such a way that he finds reading them a pleasant use of his spare time.

This, and this only, is the ultimate test of good teaching of the humanities: that the pupils who leave school and formal education behind them at sixteen or eighteen take into adult life a liking for at least one branch of learning.

Though it has been asserted that it is more important for the average man to learn to speak well and to enjoy discussion than to write well, nevertheless it is of course important that he should be able to express himself in writing clearly and briefly. Though such training must be undertaken by all, to the English teacher falls a further responsibility, for (a) it is he who must train every boy in the grammatical groundwork of good English style and help him to correct his individual faults, and (b) it is he who must develop in those lucky few who are sensitive to words a more lively sense of their value and hence a greater skill in using them.

Both these essentials grow out of literature teaching, but nevertheless they need time, and most English teachers set apart a time for the teaching of composition and grammar. But if he is not acutely sensitive to all ways of correlating formal study of grammatical expression with the boy's study of English verse and prose and with his attempts at writing plays, verse, and stories, he will lose the best method for making his formal work of real practical use. It is perhaps unnecessary to urge the enormous value of verse-writing as a means to a nice appreciation of rhythm and a careful use of words. Most modern teachers have found children take such delight in it that there is even a tendency to neglect work at English prose. But again it might be suggested that the child's reading of poetry in class will be far in advance of that he does out of class and so of that which he tries to imitate. He will only imitate what he really enjoys. And perhaps more important still, a child must begin to write verse as he wishes to write it, and he must acquire a more sensitive ear, a more critical standard by being helped to write better verse of the kind he prefers. It is no more wise to insist on all children writing ballads than it is to insist on all children writing fairy tales. Here the freedom that is found in the

school that truly believes in individual work is the breath of progress.

So much more attention is paid to speech-training in the schools of to-day that it is probable that the friendly art of reading aloud will be revived. It is a pity when it finds no place in the school for older children, because, above all, a class enjoys this way of sharing a book. It makes a break from more strenuous work and brings the unscholastic attitude towards literature to the fore.

If a child has been taught reading carefully in the lower school and encouraged to read widely for himself, he should be able to take his share in the work. The best readers should take turns with the teacher in reading to the class; those who are less good should read to the teacher. There is no more effective method of testing a boy's understanding of verse or prose than by hearing him read it. Phrasing, meaning of words, the general atmosphere, all must be appreciated, and it should be assumed that careful preparation for the literature lesson entails at least one reading aloud of the passage. This should be as necessary in the preparation of prose as of verse, and if writers more often read their prose aloud, especially to a critical audience, many a page would be corrected. It goes without saying that no teacher of literature is fully qualified who does not read sufficiently well to bring out the beauty and charm of the text he is presenting to his class.

Finally, why is story-telling as an art so neglected in the teaching of literature? Constantly a class is expected to write a chapter of a story, or a short story, but here is an obvious case where skill in speech is more desirable than in writing.

But the art does not consist in 'telling in their own words' a story that has just been read to them in a perfect form, as unforgivable an exercise as it would be to let them try to play, for the class, a Beethoven sonata after a pianist had played it for them. Competitions for the best ending of an exciting story, for the best amplification of potted plots, will give the class much amusing practice in making a narrative interesting, dramatic, and living. Until a teacher has had a class that has really become interested in story-telling he does

not realize how delightful an art it is and how sympathetic to the children's interests. There is probably no better way of teaching appreciation for good narrative style and the short story.

So much is written by business men and journalists about teachers' incapacity to teach the painful art of spelling, that a sympathizer with teachers hesitates to add a criticism.

But, as in certain difficulties in Arithmetic, it is by patient and constant work at spelling from the day a child begins formal work to the day when he feels spelling has no terrors for him that the art is acquired. As the child needs the word he must acquire the sound of it and the shape of it, and the ability to reproduce that shape nearly always in a different script. If the business man would consider what this simple statement implies, he would not be as critical of teachers. However, the average child can spell most words, and just as reading aloud shows a teacher where he needs help in interpreting a text, so writing shows where he needs help in spelling a word. At this point the child must work, and his attitude should be that it is forgivable to spell a word wrong once, but then he should at once master it and not let it master him. Thus, between the ages of eight and fifteen, he should conquer the difficulties to be found in spelling of ordinary words that he uses constantly. For the rest, he must learn to use a dictionary and to verify the spelling of any word of which he is doubtful before he sends in his letter of application or his typed copy of the master's dictated letter.

When a teacher finds his whole class reads carelessly and spells badly, he should take it as a sign that too much ground is being covered and consequently too little time spent in ensuring that step by step and little by little, as interest in language and literature grows deeper and fuller, the work is made more accurate and precise.

In the preceding section literature was classified as an art of common interest to boys and girls, and there is great need for teachers of normal 'non-literary' pupils to consider the teaching of literature as the teaching of an art to be practised and enjoyed as painting or music. To adapt or make a play to act, to write a story for a magazine, captions for the

miming of a troupe of players, a poem for the school concert, makes writing a pleasant art to be practised rather than that curious subject called composition. And, as has been said before, both prose and poetry are read more critically and with greater appreciation by the amateur writer, be he old or young. One of the reforms that is long overdue is this training in the practice of writing similar to that given by the art master in the practice of drawing. Could it be effected, English people would become a nation of writers as well as water-colour painters.

The other innovation that all teachers who are keen amateur actors should forward is the foundation of 'A Children's Drama League'. A branch should be found in every borough and village and the children should regularly produce plays and see those of other members. Two types of plays could be given—those produced by an adult and those entirely the work of children.

It would be wise for theatre managers and others financially interested in drama to subsidize such a League heavily, for these amateur playwrights and actors would eventually greatly increase the number of intelligent and devoted theatre-goers.

## 2. *Geography.*

It is not with the formal teaching of Geography as a subject that criticism should be given by a critic who is not a teacher thereof. But perhaps it will, at any rate, help the young specialist in his teaching if he considers this subject not so much as a science but as an intellectual interest likely to be continued when the boy leaves school.

In this section an attempt has been made to deal with such subjects as English, Arts and Crafts, from this point of view, and it would be a serious argument against continuing Geography and History for the type of pupil we have been considering if one had to acknowledge that the study must end with school life.

It is a vexed question as to how much of the science of Geography is necessary for the citizen of the world in order that he may understand something of the physical conditions of the world he lives in and be able to view with some under-

standing and appreciation the lives of the different nations. But modern teachers seem to be more in accord than they were about this matter, and certainly the teaching seems to grow steadily better and more educative. There is, however, still much to be done, at any rate with the average boy and girl, before he asks for a book dealing with a particular aspect of Geography from the librarian as willingly as he asks for a detective tale.

A greater freedom in syllabus, a greater willingness to be guided by the desire of the class, and much more individual work might encourage wider geographical reading, and thus make pupils more inclined to read books of travel and carefully written adventure when they leave school. Thus if each couple of boys in a class prepare a lecture on a given natural region and want to find interesting facts that are outside the beaten track of their hearers' knowledge, they will read for themselves books of travel and such novels as will give local colour. Any lad of fifteen could read Tomlinson's *Tidemarks* or *Galleons Reach* with great interest, and from both of them he would be bound to get much geographical material. The geography of *Kim* would make an admirable subject for such a lecture and give the boy who liked diagrams and maps much scope. And what a delightful time a class could have if the lad who was an enthusiastic walker and lover of birds were to give a lecture on the South Downs or some piece of country known personally to him. Here would be an introduction to Hudson, Jefferies, Belloc, Gilbert White, and a host of other English writers who are, as it were, liaison officers between Natural Science and Geography. Thus the aim of this type of work would appear to be to use the enthusiasms of the various members of the class, for even more people, probably, have gained an interest in a subject from a keen friend than from a good teacher.

The teacher's work should be to suggest books and so give the advance guard further help on their way. Such work should not be directly examined. The wider knowledge or more personal study of a region would eventually justify itself. But the teacher also should be alert to show the bearing of Geography on any other problem at which his class



is working. Thus often an episode in the history of geographical discovery can throw a new light on the history the students are studying. And, as was suggested above, the connection between English Literature and knowledge of the world we live in is intimate at many points. English people are born travellers and explorers, and at the same time devoted admirers of their own country. There are probably more literary regional studies, often, it is true, in the form of fiction, in English than in any continental language.

Thus a great many people first knew the look of the broad Midlands from reading *The Mill on the Floss*, of the Fen country from *Hereward the Wake*, of Hampshire from Gilbert White. Once such an interest in geographical description is acquired it grows, and lasts the intelligent man a lifetime. Such an interest can be acquired perhaps most easily from the Geography teacher with real appreciation for good English prose and poetry.

Again, if the formal teaching of relief, climate, industries, could more and more be associated with certain definite regions, the class would slowly build up associations about various typical people and the regions they live in. Many, for example, know the desert peoples of Arabia because of Doughty's *Arabia Deserta* and Gertrude Bell's *Letters*. Such an interest acts as a magnet for new material, and another book on the same district—*With Lawrence in Arabia*, for example—will be eagerly borrowed or bought. Most people have acquired this sort of interest through long years of more or less desultory reading. But it is possible that if formal Geography teaching could furnish the pupils' minds with a body of interesting knowledge about various peoples the interest in books of this type would be more widely spread and more active.

No aid to such learning should be neglected. The modern teacher has not failed to recognize the enormous value to be derived from newspapers on current events. Etna in eruption, the Thames in flood, a famine in China, all help to explain the real subject-matter of Geography and to demonstrate the fact that a knowledge of that subject is a knowledge of one aspect of life.

It is almost unnecessary to mention the value of the cinema, for even the youngest geographer realizes the value of an accurate and living picture of a district and the activities of its peoples. But even now great paintings or reproductions thereof could be more used to build up these associated ideas. Valuable as the photographs are that all good teachers collect, there is a certain love for a landscape, a certain feeling for its characteristics, that comes from lingering over a good picture. C. J. Holmes' *Dentdale* is a case in point.

To teachers who believe that Geography should give understanding of other peoples and sympathy with them, the work of the United Nations should surely make part of the course for the pupils in their last year. The economic dependence of one people on another, the needs of waterways and ports, the natural travel routes, the problem of racial misunderstandings, all make part of the content of Geography, and all point to the need of national co-operation.

### 3. *History.*

*Mutatis mutandis*, what has been written about that side of Geography teaching which is to aim at making the reader of travels is equally true about history teaching. And here again it is probable that the more historical causes and events can be associated with definite people the more likely are young historical students to get that kind of general knowledge of the life of a period that will make them willing to read further about it.

Just as in the teaching of Literature it is a common plan to give a class a good grounding in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century work, and go on to the nineteenth century, almost entirely omitting the eighteenth, so in History teaching certain periods appeal far more easily to the beginner, and anyone who leaves school at sixteen is a beginner. Once the love of literature or history is implanted, with reasonable opportunity the amateur fills up gaps for himself. Eighteenth-century literature is one of the many rewards of maturity, and for many historical problems the same remark holds good.

Perhaps in no subject is it so important that there should be one person who is responsible for surveying each child's

course. In many schools re-classification is so often made on a basis of Mathematics and English that it is quite common to meet girls who have 'done' one period of History till they have wearied of it and have no idea of another period, say the Normans, that was quite suitable for school study.

More individual work in History would prevent such a mistake, and in a school where every pupil has his own time chart which he uses throughout the school such a glaring absurdity would be avoided, an absurdity that is bad enough for those people who are continuing education after sixteen but is far worse for those who must then leave school.

How men lived, the difficulties in which they found themselves, their attempts to extricate themselves, the mistakes they made, either because they judged and acted hastily or in their ignorance failed to understand their fellow-men and appreciate their motives; all such problems are bound to come up quite naturally during History lessons and should be of very great direct value in the making of the citizen of to-day.

But though it may be that the proper study of mankind is man it is certainly not the proper study for children, and probably every sensitive onlooker has at times been horrified at the glib way in which a child of thirteen is allowed to say so-and-so was a good man some one else unwise, another the worst English king. To understand human beings is difficult enough, but to encourage children to judge on the small amount of textbook knowledge available to them seems deplorable.

A very different training, now part of every good history scheme, is that by which a class is encouraged to try to find out what actually happened by using source books. The pupils must of course be reminded that the source book is not necessarily the casket of truth, and during his last couple of years it would be invaluable for him to try to get an accurate account of some event from contemporary modern newspapers. But with the understanding of the fallibility of the written word, he does learn to use books for himself and to begin the difficult but very interesting task of weighing evidence.

It is this sort of work that makes History teaching in-

teresting and valuable. Perhaps, too, better from source books than from the best textbook, does a student learn to add contemporary histories, biographies, and memoirs to his reading, and if he is to be a good 'general' reader here is a section full of delight waiting for him.

Probably after books of travel, biographies have a more direct appeal to the general reader than any other form of non-fiction. A careful and interesting selection of biographies, used perhaps in the preparation of his History lecture or for the writing of his book, would leave the boy of sixteen with the experience that such books can be interesting and are not only for highbrows or teachers.

If in Geography the teacher finds a place for his lessons on the work of the United Nations, it is in History that the most direct teaching can be given on the duties of an English citizen. In some schools such teaching is given as 'Civics', but it seems a natural and practical application of much of the teaching of nineteenth- and twentieth-century history.

Wherever it comes a boy should receive it before he leaves school, even if he leaves at fifteen. The earlier the school-leaving age the more practical the teaching must be—class-room debates and discussions, the mock parliament, with the preliminary paraphernalia of speeches and elections, the visit to a meeting of the borough council and an investigation into the work of all local officials, some arithmetical work on the cost of government and education. All such work can be done by the boys and girls leaving the Modern Secondary School at fifteen, but with those who stay at school until they are sixteen that last year would be invaluable for such work, for in that year pupils are anxious and willing to take the responsibilities that label them grown-up. A revision of English history with the aim of showing how and why the twentieth-century citizen had acquired his share in the government of his country would surely make an excellent course.

#### 4. *Mathematics.*

A plea was made in discussing the work in Arithmetic for children in the junior school that it should be kept as closely in touch with the children's practical work as possible and

that the practice lesson should play a large part, always provided that the children were in such lessons acquiring a 'number habit' of which they could see the necessity.

In one's early youth there was no more delightful game to play than 'If I were King'. If the writer could now play 'If I were a mathematics teacher' the very first thing she would do would be to make Mathematics optional instead of compulsory, and to let it be known that anyone who wanted help in Mathematics could get it at stated times in a given room.

(1) Probably the first result would be that most pupils who were not set on qualifying in a given examination in which Mathematics were compulsory would drop out of the classes. Better work could then be done, for greater attention could be given to those who though really slow, or confused, wanted to do the work.

(2) The people who were really keen on Mathematics would find more help available at those points at which they needed it and would raise the standard of the work done.

(3) Those who left the classes would turn their attention to subjects in which they were interested; in some cases, as in Literature and History, they would need no more Mathematics than many an admirable historian or critic possesses; in other branches of work, say physics or applied art, or in the art of housekeeping, they might find they needed more knowledge or practice, and would then turn to that branch of Mathematics with a will.

(4) The Mathematics would then become more real, for they would be acquired in close connection with the needs of the school. There would probably, though this is prophecy, be further work done in solid geometry, mensuration, and applied mathematics, and less theoretical work.

(5) And, above all, the two psychological causes of bad results would be removed. For firstly fear would almost vanish as a deterrent, except in the case of the few unhappy people who had to qualify in Mathematics and who knew they could not do them. And secondly a new attitude would come into the school about Mathematics. If every one not only does them but is classified on results, there is an effort

made to get all up to a given standard at a given time. Now if people do not work at their own rate in Mathematics the quick tend to get careless and the slow to get muddled. It is muddled thinking that is fatal and once a boy has had even one experience of not knowing where his difficulty lies, it may take months of careful teaching to put him on the right road again.

(6) Finally, as a matter of fact, Mathematics as an ordinary subject is no more important than any other. Learnt at one's own rate, and with help from a teacher who is not frightening, it is to most people delightful. They can realize they are getting on, and there is a series of graduated problems to be solved. It is because it has been made a most favoured subject in so many schools that it has suffered. Once the attitude has been adopted that it is a good game that any average person, who will be careful, can play, it will earn its fair share of popularity with boys and girls, and may even take a part in the occupations of leisure hours.

### 5. *Modern Languages.*

It is a pity that so many pupils from the secondary schools, who have often been working at French for five years, leave not only unable to speak it or write a simple letter correctly, but with no desire to improve. Modern methods, with the increased insistence on speech and the use of phonetics, have undoubtedly resulted in a better accent and more familiarity with the sound of the language, but if the pupil drops all work at it when he leaves school, we are not much further on than in the days when every one steadily worked through accidence, including enormous memorizing of exceptions to rules, and then did the same with syntax.

This then is the problem many of us would like the specialist to solve: that a boy who leaves school at sixteen should speak and understand one foreign language sufficiently well to take his part in a simple conversation and should be sufficiently interested in the literature of the language to be willing to read an averagely easy book. In schools that are really keen on their pupils reaching this standard, a great effort is made to arrange that they hear French spoken frequently, that they

have short daily practice in small classes in speaking it, and that short interesting stories are read. French clubs, French holidays, the wireless lessons, are all aids. But perhaps the greatest aid of all is the attitude of the school. A child in a well-educated 'European' family finds that it is tacitly assumed that every one speaks either French or German, and he is encouraged to 'grow up' in this respect. There should be the same assumption in a secondary school, and it should be as much the thing to be able to speak courteously to a Frenchman in his own tongue as to be able to read excellently in one's own, or to play excellently the national games.

Such an attitude can do as much to make growing boys and girls interested and appreciative of another nation's point of view as can the best and most humane Geography or History teaching.

# EXERCISES

## PART I

1. Consider your own experience as a child (or that of a child well known to you) in order to discover what helped or checked a liking for one or more of the following arts : music, painting, poetry. Suggest what use could be made of this experience in your teaching.

2. Suggest activities that children would gladly undertake and that would lead to the study of (a) Geography, (b) History.

3. Give examples from your own experience of all or any of the following : A child who improved in some kind of skill (writing, for example) ; a careless worker in mathematics who became accurate ; a boy who taught himself a craft. What aroused the desire for improvement and how was it achieved ? To what use, if any, can you put your knowledge of these facts ?

4. Give examples, from your own experience if possible, of divergence of standards of technique between children and their elders. How were these differences of opinion overcome ?

5. Give examples of activities that have aroused in children known to you a desire for further skill in some ' tool ' subject (e.g. reading or writing). Try to suggest a lesson or a series of lessons that would arouse a similar desire.

6. Give examples from your own school days (a) of lessons in which the application ran parallel with the teacher's exposition, (b) those in which the teacher's work consisted mainly in answering questions asked by the children, (c) those in which the teacher's ignorance of the ' previous knowledge ' of the class led to some serious difficulty.

7. Write notes for a practice lesson on some subject which you are taking in college in order to ensure (a) sufficient work for each student, (b) graduation in difficulty of work, (c) possibility of help for each student and correction of faults.

8. Criticize the following notes of lessons and examine how far they conform to the scheme suggested in Chapter II.:

*Lesson : Composition.*

*Age of children : 12-15.*

*Number in form : 40.*

*Time : 45 minutes.*



*Aim.* These children write 'sticky' compositions using a very limited vocabulary. They are slow to adapt themselves to a new form of lesson, and they dislike using their imaginations (so I am told). This lesson is intended to show them the quantity of words which they know but seldom think of using, and to help them to select from among the number of similar words at their disposal the one most suited to their purpose.

*Manner.* I shall take the lesson as briskly and informally as I can. I want the children to look on searching for the right word as *fun* and not as something they are obliged to do owing to a passing whim on my part.

I. What is the opposite of:

Wisdom, Curiosity, Fidelity, Bravery, Radiance, Hospitality, Boastfulness, Charity, Value?

II. Write down a list of words which mean something like 'Joy'.

III. Write down as many adjectives as possible (not colours) which could be applied to a sunset.

IV. Complete the following similes:

Her hair was black as — ?

Her eyes shone like — ?

He seemed to walk as swiftly as — ?

The girls danced like — ?

He was as happy as — ?

The policeman stood as steady as — ?

The wind howled like — ?

The moon looked like — ?

The beat of the horse's hooves was as regular as — ?

She was as pale as — ?

The beads were clear as — ?

In each case I shall take their similes, write them on the board, discuss with them and determine which is the best.

*Subject:* English Reading.

*Age of children:* 13-15 years.

*Number in form:* 40.

*Time:* 45 minutes.

*Introduction.* As I have no idea what standard of reading these children have, I shall spend the first few minutes in asking them to tell me about the last story they read. (It was called *The Mosaic Vision of Creation*, by Miller.) This should let me know if they read well for meaning and what their power of language is.

*Reading.* I have chosen an extract from Dickens this week, 'The Pickwick Club on the ice', partly as a direct contrast in style to the last work and because the weather rather lends itself to an extract of this type.

*Introducing the Extract.* I shall say a few words about Dickens, ask if they know of any books which he wrote, tell them that this piece is

taken from the *Pickwick Papers*, and give in one sentence the explanation given at the head of the chapter. I will then ask them to read the first four pages silently (to the end of paragraph 14), and I will explain that they are doing it as a preparation for oral reading so that they will know what the piece is about and what expression to put into it. *2nd Reading.* Paragraph by paragraph round the class. As there are a good many characters mentioned I will ask them to close their books afterwards and give the names of as many as they can remember. I will tell them before they begin that I shall expect this, and it will ensure all working. They can write them down in an odd space and we will see who has the best memory.

*Subject :* Arithmetic.

*Age :* 13-15 years.

*Number in form :* 20.

*Time :* 40 minutes.

*Aim of Lesson.* A general revision of all rules, taken in the form of test papers from Ballard's *Fundamental Arithmetic*, Book VII. Particular notice being taken of style, the way in which sums are written down, that clear statements are given, and symbols used in the correct place, and not omitted where the meaning is ambiguous without them.

*Introduction.* I will first remind them about keeping their records by filling in the sums they do to-day. Then I will put the numbers of fresh sums for them to do, on the board, and ask them to copy the list down either on an odd piece of paper, or in a space in their books.

*Lesson.* There are one or two sums which they have not been working in quite the best way. These I will show on the board, letting them work the sums with me. For the rest of the time they will get on with their own work, and I will go round correcting, and helping individuals.

*Previous Knowledge.* The children have learnt all the rules which they need for the Cambridge exam. some are taking in the summer. The last of these being logarithms and the formulae for Simple Interest.

9. Think over some lesson given to you or by you and try to analyse the causes of success or failure.

10. Give examples from your own experience in which failure to observe any of the conditions for successful teaching (as they are stated on pp. 26-32) led to dire results. Are there any other counsels that you would give to a beginner?

11. How would you try to use (a) a child's first-hand knowledge of a district which you were describing, (b) his knowledge of a story which you are telling to a class?

Suggest other cases in which a child's knowledge should be of use to his class.

12. Choose six stories that you would like to tell to a class of children (state age of class). Analyse at least one to show (a) how you would

obtain the right atmosphere, (b) how you would lead up to the climax, (c) what adventitious aids you would use, e.g. pictures.

13. Tell a story you know well and like to a few students and take their criticisms to heart.

14. What is to be said for and against : (a) reading stories to a class, (b) memorizing stories before telling them, (c) telling stories in your own words, (d) letting a child re-tell a story to a class ?

15. What pictures, if any, would you use when telling or reading the following stories : (a) to a class of country children, (b) to a class of town children ?

The death of Balder.

The story of Ruth.

David Copperfield's journey to Dover.

The Robin Hood stories.

Age of children : 10 years.

16. Describe to a friend a place well known to you ; show him a photograph of the same place and note in what respects your description was more or less effective than the photograph.

Now listen critically to a description of a place well known to you and note where it succeeds or fails in recalling the place. Consider the reasons for this success or failure.

17. Take any written description known to you. Visualize it and then turn to a picture of the same region and consider what help it gives you above that of the written word.

18. Try to compare what you gain from a verbal description, a picture, a map, a diagram.

19. Begin as soon as possible to make a collection of stories in which the action is such that children in junior or middle school would be compelled to visualize either their historical or geographical setting.

20. Re-consider some such book as Conrad's *Youth*, H. M. Tomlinson's *Tidemarks* or Kipling's *Kim* in order to find out how far it helped you to visualize the scenery and understand the life in a strange land.

21. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the following 'illustrations' : (a) a collection of materials showing good pattern or good combinations of colour, (b) a diagram to show faulting, (c) a plan of a theatre or castle.

22. Suggest illustrations, comparisons and analogies that would help a class (aged about twelve) to understand the following : (a) the attitude of Roundheads to the Cavaliers, (b) wireless telegraphy, (c) the meaning of simple interest, (d) a glacier.

23. Re-consider Matthew Arnold's simile in 'Sohrab and Rustum' in order to find out why they are effective.

24. Turn to the notes of lessons on pp. 180-182 and frame a set of teacher's questions that would revise one of the lessons in an interesting way for the class.

## PART II

25. How would you have dealt with the difficulty cited on p. 46? Give reasons for your answer.

26. Give examples from your own experience of difficulties arising in the class-room because of a misunderstanding between teacher and pupil or pupils. How were they solved?

27. Criticize and illustrate the conditions suggested on pp. 49-52 for obtaining right feeling in a class-room. Can you give further suggestions on this point?

28. How would you deal with the following children? In framing your answer use all the knowledge you have acquired from your own experience as a child, from your school days, and from your knowledge of children out of school:

- (1) The child who is spoilt at home.
- (2) A child who has been spoilt by a teacher.
- (3) The over-excitabile child.
- (4) The restless child.

29. Describe briefly the most pleasing class-room in which you have worked. What were the arrangements for storing class apparatus and the children's possessions? If they were not adequate suggest how the defect could be remedied.

30. Describe the most depressing class-room known to you and suggest ways in which a class teacher could have improved it.

31. What is to be said for and against (a) a school uniform, (b) a school hat?

32. Under what conditions have you found the following aids to interpretation and understanding:

- (a) An enlarged drawing of some natural object.
- (b) A diagram showing the working of a coal-pit.
- (c) A photograph of country unknown to you.
- (d) A model of a building.

33. Suggest ways other than that given on p. 65 by which children could be trained to respect public property.

34. Answer for yourself the questions put on p. 68 and justify your decisions by reference to your own experience.

35. Do you consider it a real economy to increase the number in a class (a) from 20 to 30, (b) from 40 to 50? Indicate to what extent the age of the scholars would affect your decision and make clear what part your own experience plays in your conclusions.

36. Compare and contrast the advantages and disadvantages of supervised individual work and class teaching.

37. What is your answer to the question on p. 72, 'Was this or was this not good class teaching?' Give reasons for your answer and indicate on what experience you base it.

38. Give examples of class lessons that you found distinctly helpful

and stimulating. Try to show why they were successful and contrast them with other lessons that were, for you, waste of time.

39. Suggest projects similar to those cited on p. 86 that might be adapted for work in the junior school. Show in each case what part you think the teacher should take in the scheme.

### PART III

40. In what respects did you find the work of the senior school followed easily from that you did in the junior department? What difficulties did you have to overcome? Suggest ways in which the change of school could have been made easier for you.

41. Give an account of any of the following of which you have had personal experience; discuss possible reforms that you would like to make:

- (a) A school medical examination.
- (b) Inter-school sports.
- (c) A prefect system.
- (d) A house system.
- (e) A school concert.
- (f) A staff play.

42. Consider your own school life, or that of children well known to you in connection with the following points:

- (a) The teaching of Arithmetic in the junior school.
- (b) The amount of home-work required from children sitting for scholarships.
- (c) The difference between the type of book read out of school and those during school hours.

43. What are your views on the teaching of the child with special aptitude? What factors would you consider before deciding whether he should omit some large section of school work?

44. Revise pp. 83-87 on project and problem methods with a view to deciding their value as means of unifying the curriculum.

45. What is to be said for and against setting aside definite hours on the time-table for (a) English, (b) Arithmetic, (c) Needlework, (d) Music?

46. Draw up a syllabus of six lessons on some subject which you know well and would like to teach to children (state age). State time of lessons, knowledge of the class and those parts of the course which would be covered by the children in the periods set aside for individual work:

Re-consider your criticisms of the notes of lessons on pp. 180-182 and in light of them write full notes for *one* of your lessons.

47. Try to make a time-table for a week (a) for a class in a junior school, (b) for a matriculation class that shall fulfil the conditions stated on pp. 129-134.

48. An experienced examiner made the following answer to the question, 'Is he a good student?' 'No, he's a good examination candidate, he learns facts accurately and reproduces them clearly.'

Annotate this criticism to show (a) your views on the examination, (b) your views of the candidate.

49. 'In a good school there should not be an antithesis between interesting work and hard work.' Discuss this statement and illustrate your answer from your own experience.

50. Do you consider that the boy described on pp. 144-5 would make a satisfactory entrant to a senior school? Give reasons for your answer.

51. Give examples from your own experience of scholars in a senior or secondary school losing interest in work, or some branches of it, during the last two years of school life. Suggest the reasons in the case best known to you.

52. State what you know from experience of the reasons for and against the following:

(a) Giving 'points' in team games.

(b) Compulsory games.

(c) Compulsory art work.

53. Discuss the suitability of the occupations cited in (b) or (c) on p. 152. Could you suggest more interesting courses for this type of boy or girl? Justify your answer.

54. Recall any three members of your form who were not enthusiastic about school work and who were leaving school at sixteen. Suggest the sort of work which you think might have roused their enthusiasm and which they would have been likely to continue after school days.

56. Recall some of the books you read for enjoyment between the ages of fourteen and sixteen; suggest ways in which it might be possible to lead a reader of similar books to a fuller appreciation of some branch of literature.

57. Draw up a list of plays suitable for production by A Children's Drama League. State in each case if the producer is to be a child or an adult.

58. If you propose to teach Geography draw up a list of six lectures that could be given by your pupils (state age), indicating what books would be used in the preparation.

59. Make for a school library a list of books that should rouse interest in travel, exploration and life in other lands.

60. Make a list of historical stories or simply written biographies that seem to you suitable for a school library.

61. In how far can the writing and acting of historical plays be used as an incentive to interest in reading history for pleasure?

62. Try to explain your success or failure during your school years in one or more of the following subjects:

(a) Mathematics.

(b) A modern language.

(c) Latin.

(d) Games.

## AN EXERCISE IN SELF-CRITICISM

It has been constantly maintained in this book that learning is an active process to be undertaken by the learner and that no teacher can teach passive children. Obviously this principle is equally applicable to those learning to teach, and practice is of little value to any one who will not cultivate a critical attitude towards his own work. It is consoling to attribute our failures to circumstances over which we have no control, but it is wise to spend some time considering those we can modify, and hence the value of honest self-criticism of our teaching. Students often find it difficult to decide what tests to use to gauge the success of a lesson, what analyses to employ to find out the faults, and the following set of questions has been framed in the hope that it will be useful to them in the solution of these problems. Clearly all the questions cannot be used for each lesson, but until a teacher has become a reasonably impartial critic of his own work a careful consideration of the following questionnaire should help him both to better preparation and giving of lessons.

### I. General tests applicable to all lessons.

1. Try to find the proportion of the class who have mastered the lesson and are ready to do new work and of those who need further help (e.g. how many could answer a set of questions, work the sum, sing the song, etc.).

2. Try to account for those children who were uninterested and did little work. (Such labels as 'naughty', 'always troublesome', will not help you.)

3. Whatever the type of lesson, did the children have sufficient practice, e.g. did all work sufficient examples (not only the quick children), make the map, draw the parts of the flower, learn the poem, etc., etc.?

4. In what ways was the lesson an improvement on the last or less successful?

5. How can the omissions and mistakes be made good in future lessons?

### II. Tests applicable to special lessons.

#### A. The Knowledge Lesson.

1. Did the children acquire the knowledge I wished to impart? e.g. could they answer questions, apply the knowledge to solving a problem, add to it from a textbook?

2. Were they interested in it—e.g. willing to read further, to bring information from home, to talk about the lesson spontaneously and ask questions?

3. Could the children do anything better or more eagerly as a result, e.g. make a better pageant or play, write a more accurate story of foreign life, etc.?

#### B. The Appreciation Lesson.

1. Did the children actively show pleasure, e.g. volunteer to learn the poem, to copy it and re-read it, to bring similar poems or pictures to school, to talk of it out of lesson time?

2. In what ways did I help the children to find more in the play, poem, music or picture, e.g. did they comment on any special characteristic—rhythm or colour, etc.; did they ask how some colour was made; did they try to imitate the verse or make a similar story?

3. How did the exercise I gave them help to appreciation, e.g. another verse of a poem; suitable words for music, etc.?

#### C. The Skill Lesson.

1. Why did I try to impart this skill?

2. Did the children see the use of acquiring it?

3. Where did my demonstration succeed, where fail (e.g. was it clear to the dull children, boring to the quick, was it too lengthy, was the illustration large enough for all to see, etc.)?

4. What proportion of children were occupied satisfactorily throughout the lesson?

5. What arrangements did I make for children who finished before and those who had not by the end of the lesson? Were they adequate?

6. Were my arrangements for help and correction satisfactory, e.g. how many children wasted time because they needed help, how many children have again made mistakes in the corrected work?

7. How many children can use this skill for some purpose of their own?



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